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forest primeval

This was the dark forest primeval;

But the pioneer came in his might,

And down through the vast leafy temple

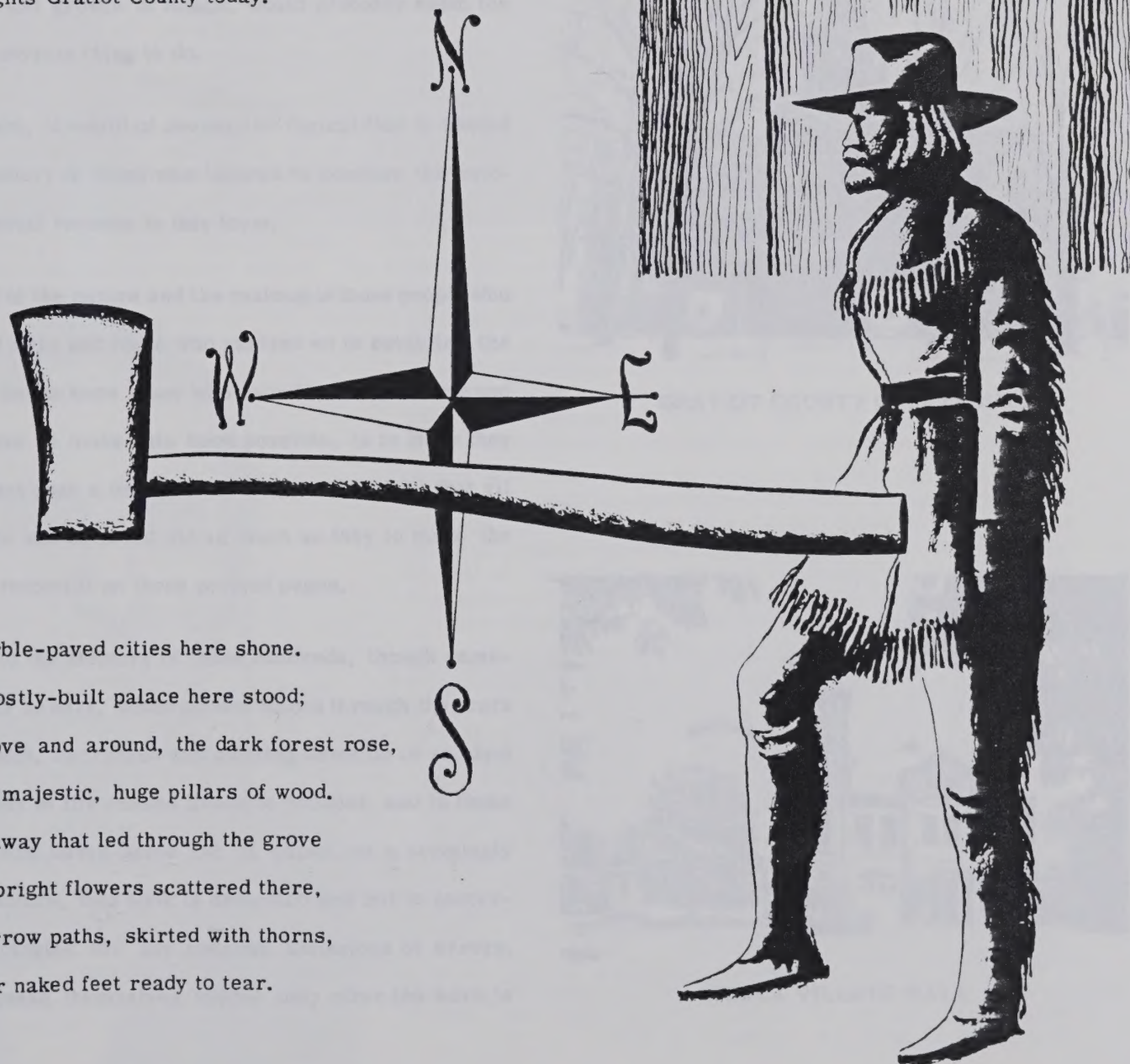
Spread gleaming the pioneer's light.

With his ax on his shoulder, he came

From the hills and valleys away;

Where the sun in his splendor uprising

Lights Gratiot County today.



No marble-paved cities here shone.

No costly-built palace here stood;

But above and around, the dark forest rose,

With majestic, huge pillars of wood.

No highway that led through the grove

Had bright flowers scattered there,

But narrow paths, skirted with thorns,

Their naked feet ready to tear.

1/19

Forest priming

THE NEW FOREST PRIMER
THE NEW FOREST PRIMER
THE NEW FOREST PRIMER
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ITHACA CENTENNIAL 1855-1955

DEDICATION

To dedicate this book to the memory of one man or one woman, or one family, or a group of families or individuals, whose life and labors were so closely entwined with the establishment and growth of Ithaca, would probably seem the natural and obvious thing to do.

If not to them, it would of course, be logical that it should be to the memory of those who labored to compile the written and pictorial records in this form.

Yet, to read of the nature and the makeup of those people who first settled here and those who carried on to establish the community, and to know those who sacrificed their time and their energies to make this book possible, is to know they would not want such a dedication. They would insist that all the countless and unnamed did as much as they to make the history and record it on these printed pages.

Therefore, to the memory of those hundreds, though nameless they may be here, whose patient labors through the years and whose faith, sacrifices and untiring devotion to an ideal and better way of life caused Ithaca to prosper, and to those individuals who saved some bit of paper, or a seemingly valueless picture, this book is dedicated and left to posterity with apologies for any unknown omissions or errors, which will make themselves visible only after the work is finished.



GRATIOT COUNTY COURTHOUSE



ITHACA VILLAGE HALL

GENERAL GRATIOT



At the time of the creation and naming of many central Michigan counties by the Territorial Legislature in 1831, various heroes of the War of 1812 were honored. It was one of these military men - Brigadier General Charles Gratiot - for whom Gratiot county was named. Born in Missouri in 1788, he was graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1806 and entered the Army as a second lieutenant of engineers.

He was appointed captain in 1808, and served with distinction in the war with Great Britain as chief engineer with Harrison's Army in 1813-14. He was brevetted colonel, and engaged in the defense of Fort Meigs in 1813 and in the attack on Fort Mackinac in 1814. In 1815 he was appointed major of engineers, and superintended fortifications on the Delaware river, and subsequently those in Hampton Roads, Virginia.

He became lieutenant-colonel in 1819, and colonel and principal engineer in charge of the Engineer bureau of Washington, D.C., in 1828. He was brevetted brigadier-general May 24, 1828, and appointed Inspector of West Point. He held this office until December, 1838, when he was dismissed by President Martin Van Buren for having failed to pay into the treasury certain balances of money placed in his hands for public purposes.

According to one account, the matter was referred to the Judiciary Committee, which reported to the United States Senate. After thorough investigation and the taking of testimony, the committee seems to have cleared him of all shadow of guilt. But his military career was over, and after holding a clerkship in the land office in Washington from 1840 until 1855, he went to St. Louis, Missouri, where he died in destitute circumstances on May 18, 1855, the same year that the county named for him was organized.

JOHN JEFFERY

To no one is Gratiot county more indebted for its advancement and improvement than to John Jeffery, born in Monmouth county, New York, August 26, 1812. The record of his early life is incomplete, but his earliest known occupation was freighting on the Erie Canal. He went to Niagara county, New York, in 1836, and bought a considerable tract of land.

In 1853 he visited several western states, and finally selected a tract of land at the geographical center of Gratiot county; this included the present site of Ithaca. He took possession of his property in 1855, when the country in every direction was for miles an unbroken wilderness. In 1856 he platted the Village of Ithaca, and on March 3 of the same year the board of supervisors established there the county seat.

Mr. Jeffery's location of land in 1853 included 1,120 acres, and he bought additional tracts up to the time of his death. It was his policy to make sales of land only to actual settlers, a principle to which he strictly adhered. At the time of his death he was the proprietor of about 5,000 acres, including choice farming lands and pine lands, and also a considerable portion of the original plat of Ithaca.

Prudence, economy, temperance and industry were marked traits of his character; and all the acts of his life were tempered by good judgment, sound sense and consideration for the permanent prosperity and welfare of the community which he founded, and of which he was for about twenty years so useful and honored a member.

Mr. Jeffery was married in 1868 to Louisa Smith Baney. They became parents of two sons, John and Ira. Mr. Jeffery died at Ithaca, Michigan, on March 5, 1874.





FIRST KNOWN PICTURE OF ITHACA taken in 1868. Looking west at Center and Main Streets. The rail fence at the lower left enclosed the courthouse square. The man on the sidewalk is H. P. Howd, one of the early residents. The building at the upper lefthand corner is the VanBuskirk Hotel built by John Jeffery. The woods in the background were owned by W. E. Winton and the high front building on the right is W. W. Comstock's second hotel, which burned and was replaced by the Des Ermia House.



CORNER OF MAIN AND CENTER STREETS looking west. 1879. (1) Fence around Court House. (2) First bank. (3) Baptist church. (4) Jeffery residence.



CORNER MAIN AND CENTER STREETS looking west 1886. (1) Bank. (2) Floral arch over street for county G.A.R. convention. (3) Wooden water tower. (4) Des Ermia House, 1890 fire started here.



LOG CABIN BUILT during the Harrison-Cleveland campaign of 1888 and dedicated August 28 of that year with an estimated crowd of 7,000 in attendance. It stood on the southwest corner of Center and Pine River Streets on the spot where Jeffery's first frame building in Ithaca stood.



Village History

ITHACA VILLAGE

When John Jeffery came from Niagara county, New York, he located on a large tract of land in the center of Gratiot county in 1853 on the site which was to become Ithaca. However, he did not immediately occupy his land but was engaged elsewhere until 1855, when he came on and began making improvements. Jeffery gave Ithaca its name from his home town in New York.

During the year 1855, other settlers began to make their appearance on the gently rolling area surrounding Ithaca which showed agricultural and lumbering possibilities that were alluring. Among early settlers of prominence within the next year or so were Lucius C. Knapp, Simon Knott, John L. Bush, Frank Metter, William W. Comstock, Francis Nelson, Lafayette Church and William Potter.

In 1855 John Jeffery cleared the land which became the main business district of the town. He put up a small frame building in the fall of 1855 on the spot now occupied by the Seaver Hotel on the southwest corner of Center and Pine River Streets. The front part of the building was designed as a store for supplies as were needed by the settlers, and the rear portion was occupied as a residence by L. C. Knapp and family.

The old Jeffery homestead was on West Center Street. Two years after Mr. Jeffery's death in 1874, his widow built the home which is now the Barden Funeral home, at a cost of \$5,000. The barn later became the Carl Ranger residence to the east. The original home was divided into two houses and moved, one part to 115 West Newark Street, the other to a location just west of 320 West Center Street; it was moved out of town when the present railroad bridge was built.

Village Is Platted

Previous to the meeting of the board of supervisors in special session, February 11, 1856, Mr. Jeffery brought Surveyor S. S. Hastings from St. Louis to his settlement in the center of the county, and had a village plat surveyed and duly laid out into lots, blocks, streets and alleys.

Upper Ithaca, forty acres with Pine River Street on the east and Center Street on the south, was platted that same winter by Simon Nott. What was called Northeast Ithaca was platted by H. W. Benham in January, 1868; it adjoins the original plat on the east. Charles E. Williams platted a small addition on the north side of Center Street from Union Street east. Parmer R. Phillips' addition, platted March 31, 1880, lies north of Arcada Street and west of Pine River Street. Frank Gwinner made an addition, platted June 4, 1884; it is east of St. Johns Street, south of Center Street.

Jeffery's second addition, platted by John Jeffery's heirs June 12, 1885, is a tract between Pine River and Maple Streets, south of Center Street. T. S. Barnes' addition, platted March 5, 1886, consists of territory lying on north side of Center Street between Barnes and Union Streets. N. Church's addition is north and east of Barnes' addition; it was platted June 28, 1888.

On December 15, 1892, J. Lee Potts and James B. Crawford platted 40 acres lying east of and adjoining Frank Gwinner's addition. William T. Naldrett platted a small addition lying south of the Baptist church on May 13, 1904.

First Log Courthouse

Following the permanent location of the county seat at Ithaca, Mr. Jeffery erected a two-story log building about where Ithaca and Center Streets now intersect. This was for the use of the county for court purposes, sessions of the board of supervisors, and for the county officers, until the county should erect its own building on the public square donated by Mr. Jeffery for that purpose. This they did in 1861.

In this original log building school sessions were held until the first school house was erected on the site now occupied by the village hall.

Gratiot Center Established

Early in the spring of 1856, James J. Bush of Howell erected a small log house on the parcel of land located on the southwest corner of Center and Elm Streets. He put in a small stock of merchandise but soon sold out to John Knight and Frank Miller, the latter the prosecuting attorney elected the previous fall.

Application had been made for the establishment of a postoffice and, the application having been granted, John Knight was appointed postmaster. The postoffice was named "Gratiot Center," and that remained its name until the spring of 1857 when it was changed to "Ithaca."

First Ithaca Hotel

In the summer of 1856, William W. Comstock bought the west half of Block five from Mr. Jeffery. On this location, today occupied by the Standard Oil station at the northeast corner of Center and Main Streets, Comstock erected a hewed log building to be used as a residence and hotel. When the property was sold to Hiero B. Fox, the hotel was rebuilt and called the Fox House. In other times it was known also as Retan House, Imperial Hotel, Hotel Mathews and Hotel Voigt.

Comstock built a two-story hotel building on the opposite corner west, on the site now occupied by Rhynard's Shell Service. When this building was destroyed by fire, he erected a three-story hotel building on the same site in 1879. This building was afterward known as the Des Ermia House, the same in which originated the big fire of July 10, 1890.

Lumbering Interests Predominate

Of great importance to Ithaca's prosperity, were the lumbering operations in Ithaca before the turn of the century. The extent of the industry is treated later in this book under lumbering, pages 63 - 68.

First Railroad

Ithaca's first railroad - the stub of the Detroit, Lansing & Northern from Alma - was built in 1882 by local enterprise and capital. The completion of the Ann Arbor Railroad to Ithaca and St. Louis in 1884 was the occasion for much rejoicing.



VILLAGE COUNCIL

First Row: President, Harold Goodwin; Ted Rayburn, Norton Gibbs, Vera Ranger.
Second Row: Lloyd Peters, Robert Wetzel, Roland Reeves, Willard Dilts, Norman Trexler.

The depot at the time was located in the northeast part of town, and a spur ran over the present course to the mills and factories in the south part of town. In 1897 this spur was made the present mainline, the one in east Ithaca was torn out and the route was extended north where it joined the old stub tracks into Alma. In 1895 the name was changed to the Ann Arbor Railroad.

The first shipment by rail into Ithaca went over the stub road from Alma December 28, 1882. It was a carload of machinery for William F. Thompson's butter tub factory. The first car of freight to go out from Ithaca was a carload of wheat shipped by Nelson & Barber on January 2, 1883. The first passenger train over the stub line was on June 24 the same year.

First Paving

In 1884 Ithaca voted a bond issue of \$5,000 to gravel the streets. The paving of the business section of Center Street came during the summer and fall of 1909. A still more extensive job of paving was done in 1913, the paving of a total of 11 blocks, three on Center Street, five on Pine River and one on Main Street.

In 1921, the old M-14 was paved from the Methodist church one block east and south on St. Johns Street to the south village limits. At the same time the pavement was extended north on Pine River Street from North Street to the village limits.

M-14 was later changed to US-27 and instead of running through Pompeii, it was shifted to two miles east of Ithaca, then south to St. Johns. In 1928, the new US-27 south to the county line was paved.

Sewer System Installed

Ithaca's first sewer system was approved by the voters in 1900 and the job let on the main sewers. Two bond issues of \$10,000 and \$15,000 were necessary to complete the project.

The village's first electric lighting was a private project by James Moore, local implement dealer, whose place of business was just east of the village hall. The current was turned on September 19, 1891.

The following year the Ithaca Electric Lighting Co. was organized by several prominent citizens, and served successfully until 1904 when the village decided to bond for \$13,000 and established a municipal lighting plant.

Current from the new generators was turned on February 12, 1905. This continued in operation until 1923, when Consumers Power Co. purchased the municipal plant; it still furnishes the electricity and natural gas for the village.

Village Incorporated

Ithaca Village was incorporated in accordance with the provisions of the statute, by resolution of the board of supervisors, unanimously adopted October 12, 1869.

Village Presidents

Wm. E. Winton, Nov. 1869,
March, 1870-73
Chas. E. Williams, 1874
Schuyler W. Ambler, 1875-78
Giles T. Brown, 1879-80
Joseph H. Seaver, App. Dec., 1880
H. R. Pattengill, 1881-82
Marvin R. Salter, 1883-84
Wm. B. Scattergood, 1885
Byron H. Sawyer, 1886
J. N. McCall, 1887
Wm. B. Scattergood, 1888
O. H. Heath, 1889
W. M. Weller, 1890

John M. Everden, 1891-93
Frank H. Horr, 1894-95
Frank W. Brown, 1896
N. B. Bradley, 1897
Wilbur Nelson, 1898
Jas. B. Crawford, 1899
John M. Everden, 1900
Kelly S. Searl, 1901
H. C. Barstow, 1902
Wm. A. Leet, 1903
Charles E. Webster, 1904
James P. Gibbs, 1905
Charles G. Graham, 1906
Fred S. VanBuskirk, 1907

Frank M. Harrington, 1908
Fred S. VanBuskirk, 1909-11
Edward Hannah, 1912-13
Chase E. Webster, 1914-15
Elon Potter, 1916-17
Frank M. Harrington, 1918-19
Miles Nelson, 1920-31 (Resigned
October 6, 1931)
George Clow (App. to fill vacancy)
1931-33
B. L. Case, 1934-45
N. E. Gibbs, 1946-55
Harold Goodwin, 1955



McCORMICK DAY 1899, sponsored by Charles M. Brown, McCormick implement dealer. The last wooden buildings downtown are in the background; they burned in the first of 1905.

NORTH SIDE of Center Street,
west of Pine River Street
about 1890.

1. Building later torn down
by village. 2. Old Palace
Hall, or Armory, later Put-
nam Co. which burned in 1936
with buildings 3 and 4, then
occupied by Cashmore Poultry
and Rayburn Furniture.



WOODMEN PICNIC about 1905.



THE FIRST AUTOMOBILE
OWNED IN ITHACA. At right is
an Oldsmobile purchased by
Charles Roland sometime be-
tween 1902-1905. Mr. Roland
is driving the car and his com-
panion is Alta Leet. The car on
the left along with the passengers
is unidentified.



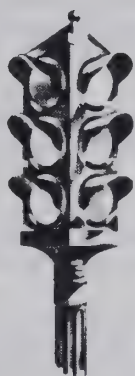


NORTH SIDE of Center Street about 1905.

1. Commercial State Bank 2. Post Office 3. Gratiot County Herald 4. Imperial Hotel



SOUTH SIDE of Center Street before
widening, 1949



NORTH SIDE of Center Street after
widening, 1949



Gratiot County



BREAKING GROUND FOR NEW COURTHOUSE JULY 24, 1900.

While there is little doubt that Indian fur traders visited this area some years previously, the first white man who left any authentic record of being in this area was William A. McOmber, who visited the territory of Gratiot in the fall of 1832 and built a shack as a base of operation near the Indian Mission, northeast of St. Louis.

No permanent settlers arrived here, however, until 14 years later when Arnold Payne settled with his family on what is now section 31 in Fulton township, in the early winter of 1846. No townships in the county were named at that time.

The following year and in 1848 the legislature passed acts which attached all eight southern townships to Clinton county. The change was short-lived however, for on February 3, 1855, the legislature ordered the organization of the county of Gratiot.

Gratiot Named. The location and boundaries of the tract of territory to be named Gratiot county was created by an act of the territorial legislature in 1831, and was named after General Charles Gratiot, an officer in the army of General William Henry Harrison, in the War of 1812.

Canal Proposed. In the early days before railroads had stretched into the wilds of Michigan, great importance was attached to navigation by water. A canal 14 miles long, connecting the Bad river and Saginaw river, was laid out and work started in 1838. After an expenditure of \$22,258, the work was abandoned in July 1839.

Ten years later the project was revived with the foundation of a \$200,000 company. But no work was done and dreams of uninterrupted navigation across the state, bringing immediate prosperity to the area, faded away.

Starving Gratiot. When the white man came in to settle this area, it is true that he found some swampy land that could not at that time be cleared and put into agricultural use. But he also found the higher land covered with great virgin forests that first produced wealth in timber, and which when harvested uncovered some of the most fertile soil in the world.

There is no doubt that these first hardy pioneers had a rugged time. But it was not until 1857 that Gratiot acquired the name "Starving Gratiot."

Early in July of 1856 a hard frost severely damaged growing crops. A second frost in August destroyed all remaining hopes for the corn crop.

Another factor contributed to hunger and destitution to come. The "Graduation Act" had been passed in 1854. By its provisions the price of government land was reduced from the regular \$1.25 per acre to 50 cents per acre. A great number of people, hoping for farms of their own, rushed to buy land in Gratiot. Then without warning came an order from the government that in order to retain title, purchasers would have to occupy their land within one year of purchase or the title would revert to the government. The result was a rush of ill-prepared settlers to this area, many of them with little or no means of support.

It was just at this time that nature failed to smile upon the county.

Early in the fall of 1856 fires swept through thousands of acres of woods. That winter, and through 1857, 1858 and into 1859, hard times continued. Crops failed and the produce raised was not sufficient to supply the many necessities of pioneer life. Word was carried down-state and supplies were sent in to relieve suffering. This, together with the appropriations made by the supervisors and superintendents of the poor, served to pull the people through. Animals did not fare so well and an early history says many "died from being unable to sustain life on browse of basswood and maple twigs."

After that serious set-back, the county made rapid progress. In 1860 the Detroit Free Press reported that "Starving Gratiot . . . where two or three years ago the people were compelled to subsist on basswood buds and roots to sustain life, is making her mark this season in the production of crops . . . Gratiot will soon be ranked as one of the most productive counties in the state."

First County Election, 1855. The act of legislature providing for the organization of Gratiot county was approved February 3, 1855. The act provided for the election, on the first Tuesday of November, 1855, of the first set of county officers. A county convention was called to take place at the residence of Lucius C. Knapp, 1-1/2 miles north of Ithaca. The property today is owned by Kenneth Fisher.

Each inhabited township, whether organized or not, was entitled to two delegates. After a somewhat warmly-contested convention, the nominations for county offices were made.

County-Seat Controversy. The controversy over the location of the county seat had already begun, and it cropped out visibly in the selection of the candidates at this convention. Those favorable to Ralph Ely's settlement (Alma) seem to have got the worst of it, judging by subsequent events. Dissatisfaction with the ticket culminated in the formation of another ticket.

Early records tell of the troubles of the county board of canvassers in reaching a conclusion as to who were elected. After charges and countercharges, the following men were declared elected on November 6, 1855:

John Cheesman, judge of probate; George E. Walker, sheriff; Orville M. Wood, clerk; Ralph Ely, treasurer; Henry Lane, register of deeds; Franklin Miller, prosecuting attorney; Henry Lane, circuit court commissioner; Sidney S. Hastings, surveyor; and Lewis B. Loomis and Levi Smith, coroners.

First Meeting of Supervisors. The first board of supervisors met at the house of Ralph Ely in Alma January 7, 1856, the purpose being to take action on the bonds of the new county officers, fix their salaries, etc. The salaries as fixed by the board were: Treasurer, \$225; Clerk, \$250; Prosecuting Attorney, \$300.

Six townships in Gratiot had made application to the state legislature at its January 1855 session to procure an organization directly from the legislature: Fulton, North Star, Arcada, Pine River, New Haven and Emerson. The township of North Shade was officially organized the previous year. These seven townships were all that had supervisors at this first meeting of the board.

Another special session of the board was called to meet on February 11, 1856. The session was held at Ithaca, in a partially-enclosed small frame building erected by John Jeffery's agent, L. C. Knapp. The site of the county seat was selected after considerable discussion: Block nine of the village plat of Ithaca.

First Courthouse. Following the permanent location of the county seat at Ithaca, Mr. Jeffery erected a two-story log building about on the site now occupied by the Methodist church.

At the session of the supervisors commencing January 7, 1861, provision was made for the erection of a county building on the courthouse square for the use of county officers. The edifice was of wood, 16 x 32 on the ground, and one story high. It stood on Center Street with its side to that street. This building did duty until the \$8,000 courthouse, erected in 1871, was ready for occupancy. The old building was then moved to South Pine River Street, on the west side. For a time it housed the bicycle repair business of J. H. Markman. Today, the Redmond Co. building occupies the site.

Second Courthouse - 1871. At the supervisors session in October 1869, a vote was authorized on a proposal to issue \$5,000 in bonds bearing 10 percent interest for five years, to build a new courthouse.



GRATIOT COUNTY JAIL



GRATIOT COUNTY Road Commis-
sion garage, built in 1940.

The bond issue carried at the next spring election by a vote of 872 to 854 and work started. The new courthouse was to be 36 x 60, two stories and basement.

First Jail Built. Although a small jail building had been authorized by the supervisors in 1870, prisoners were kept in the St. Johns jail until 1873 when a proposal from Saginaw county to keep Gratiot's prisoners for 75 cents a day was accepted.

In April 1877, by vote of the people, a \$4,000 bond issue for construction of a new sheriff's residence and jail was approved. Work was started, but by the time of the October session of the supervisors, \$5,271 had already been spent and it was estimated that it would take another \$5,000 to finish the building.

After twice defeating proposals for further bond issues, the building was completed from current tax revenues at cost of about \$11,000.

The residence portion of that building is still in use by the county sheriff.

Present Courthouse. In April 1900 the county voted to bond for \$34,000 for five years at five percent interest to erect a new courthouse. Claire Allen, then of Jackson, submitted plans and specifications which were approved by the board of supervisors.

At a special meeting of the board in July of that year bids were taken for the construction. Bids ran from \$39,249 to \$58,973. The contract was awarded at the lowest figure to A. W. Mohnke of Grand Rapids and work started.

By next spring, work was at a standstill. A building committee comprising F. W. Harrington of Ithaca, E. P. Potter of Hamilton and E. J. Alverson of Alma was appointed. Under their direction the building was completed in late 1902 and dedication services held. Cost of the building was \$57,322.68 and furnishings \$16,770.55; a total cost of \$74,103.23.

The old court house was sold for \$6,000 to the Union School district of Ithaca and was supposed to be used as a school building. It was never used as such and was later sold to Archie McCall, who dismantled it and used the lumber when he built his new home at 207 North Pine River Street, now occupied by Mrs. C. G. Larry.

First County Farm. In 1860 Gratiot county purchased a 160-acre tract of land on sections 17 and 20 of Washington township to be used as its first county farm.

The property was purchased for \$2,000 of William W. Comstock. Three years later, on January 3, 1860, the board of supervisors made a deal with Mr. Comstock to exchange the Washington property for 80 acres of land a mile south of Ithaca, which is a part of the present county farm.

The naming of superintendents of the poor came almost coincident with the organization of the county due to the destitute condition of many settlers referred to above.

New Jail Authorized. On September 9, 1938, the board of supervisors approved by a vote of 18 to 7 a resolution authorizing the building of a new \$40,000 jail.

The new jail was built under Public Works Administration with the federal government paying \$18,000 and the county \$22,000. It was one of the most modern jails in the state at the time it was built and is still rated very highly.

The 48 x 56-foot-structure provides for 43 confined prisoners with three cell blocks of eight prisoners each on the first floor; two cell blocks of eight each on the second floor, and a solitary confinement block of three cells.

Gratiot Industrially. In the early days, of course, the chief product of the county was lumber. The native forests which covered the area furnished untold millions of feet of lumber for the rapidly developing state and nation.

During the first half century of Gratiot's history sawmills flourished in all parts of the county, furnishing badly needed cash employment for many of the early settlers.

As lumbering began to diminish, firms specializing in wood products grew up in many communities. Stave mills, planing mills, furniture factories, wood product factories and tub factories flourished until about 1900.

As the lands were cleared and the fertile soil uncovered, farming began to take an increasingly important place in the county economy. At the turn of the century, it occupied a predominate position in the economic lives of all Gratiot citizens, a position which has been maintained ever since.

The early establishment of corn elevators and flour mills in many Gratiot communities did away with the long haul to the mill at Matherton, furnishing a local market not only for grain raised in the county, but also for hay and wool. Markets for poultry, dairy products and livestock also sprang up, giving evidence of the transition from pioneer to agricultural life.

The Automobile Comes. The impact of the automobile upon the economic and industrial development of the nation, in fact upon the lives of every citizen, cannot be overestimated. In the matter of roads alone, for example, besides the funds spent by the federal and state governments within Gratiot county, the Gratiot County Road commission in 1954 spent \$717,089.39, which was more than the assessed valuation of the county in the early days.

With the coming of the automobile, several attempts were made in Gratiot county to establish factories for the production of trucks. Only in Alma was the venture successful. The old Alma Manufacturing Co. had been organized in 1906. By 1913 it had established a name for itself with the McVicker gasoline engine. It then turned to the manufacture of Republic trucks just prior to World War I and was said at one time to be one of the world's biggest producers. The Bolstrum Truck Co. in St. Louis and the Trojan Truck Co. in Ithaca were short-lived.

As consolidations in auto and truck manufacturing took place, the Alma factory faded out of the picture. In its place in recent years, and occupying some of the same buildings, have come two very successful trailer-home plants: the Redman Trailer Co. and the Alma Trailer Co.

GRATIOT COUNTY Infirmary building built about 1917 to replace structure destroyed by fire.





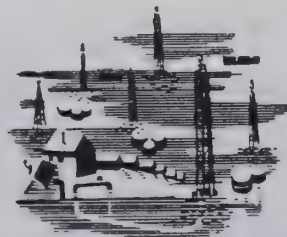
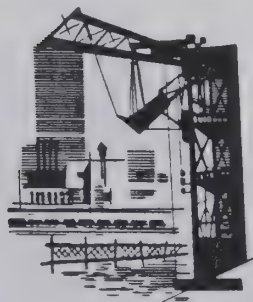
UNFINISHED NEW COURTHOUSE next to old courthouse which was moved off later.

Shortly after the discovery of oil just west of the Gratiot line in Montcalm county in 1935, refineries were erected in Alma and St. Louis. Two of these are still operating very successfully today: Leonard Refineries, Inc., and Mid-West Refineries, Inc., both at Alma.

Between Alma and St. Louis, employing about 400 men, is the Alma Piston Co., making parts for the Ford Motor Co.

Other leading industries in the county are the Michigan Chemical Co. of St. Louis and the Lobdell-Emery Co. of Alma.

In Ithaca, the Wolverine Shoe and Tanning Corp. of Rockford operates a branch factory producing shoes, and the Redmond Co. manufactures fractional horsepower electric motors used in hundreds of modern appliances and auto accessories.



GRATIOT COUNTY OFFICERS

Circuit Judge

Josiah Turner, Sept. 1858
Wilbur F. Woodworth, Jan. 1859
James Birney, July 1861
Jabez G. Sutherland, Jan. 1864
Josiah Turner, Jan. 1871
John Moore, July 1871
Wm. S. Tennant, May 1874

Henry Hart, July 1875
Sherman B. Daboll, Aug. 1889
George P. Stone, Jan. 1900
Kelly S. Searl, Jan. 1906 - Dec. 1917
Edward J. Moinet, Jan. 1918 - July 1927
Kelly S. Searl, July 1927 - Jan. 1942
Paul R. Cash, Feb. 1942 ---

Judge of Probate

John R. Cheesman, 1856
Francis Nelson, 1857-68
Elijah Peck, 1869-72
Wm. E. Winton, 1873-76
Giles T. Brown, 1877-80
Jas. Paddock, 1881-88
J. Lee Potts, 1889-92

John M. Everden, 1893-96
Chas. H. Chase, 1897-1900
Isaac S. Seaver, 1901-12
J. Lee Potts, 1913-20
Jas. G. Kress, 1921-40
Mildred E. Taft, 1941 ---

Clerk

Orville M. Wood, 1856
Henry H. Smith, 1857-58
Emery Crosby, 1859-60
Horace T. Barnaby, 1861-62
Wm. C. Beckwith, 1863-70
Nathan Church, 1871-74
Wm. B. Scattergood, 1875-80
John M. Trask, 1881-82
John T. Swigart, 1883-86
Marvin R. Salter, 1887-90

Inman N. Cowdrey, 1891-92
Jas. G. Kress, 1893-96
Hiram Haring, 1897-98
Adelbert P. Lane, 1899-1902
Clifton J. Chambers, 1903-1906
Richard E. Hughes, 1907-14
B. L. Case, 1915-22
H. E. Colwell, 1923-28
Chas. L. Hicks, 1929-46
Decolah Palmer Bradt, 1947 ---

Sheriff

Geo. E. Walker, 1856
Homer L. Townsend, 1857-60
Frederick D. Weller, 1861-64
David Bailey, 1865-68
Elisha C. Cook, 1869-72
Wm. H. Pratt, 1873-76
Geo. L. Patch, 1877-80
Alfred A. Wood, 1881-82
K. P. Peet, 1883-86
Perry D. Pettit, 1887-90
Jas. P. King, 1891-92
Perry D. Pettit, 1893-96
Nelson J. McCullough, 1897-1900

John H. Parrish, 1901-04
E. Bradford Kille, 1905-08
Frank L. Convis, 1909-10
John B. Rowell, 1911-12
Wilbur B. Ennis, 1913-14
Newel M. Bradford, 1915-18
Alfred T. Willert, 1919-22
Jacob D. Helman, 1923-26
J. L. Smith, 1927-28
Jacob D. Helman, 1929-34
Wm. Nestle, 1935-46
Clark Marr, 1947-52
Robert J. Russell, 1953 ---

Treasurer

Ralph Ely, 1856, 1861-62
A. M. Crawford, app. Feb. 12, 1856
Henry Lane, app. Oct. 13, 1856
Lafayette Church, 1857-60
Elijah Peck, 1863-66
Wm. S. Turck, 1867-72
Archibald B. Darragh, 1873-74
Schuyler W. Ambler, 1875-78
Wm. M. Barstow, 1879-82
Sylvester B. Heverio, 1883-86
Wm. Brice, 1887-90
Frank Munson, 1891-92
John W. Otto, 1893-96
Henry Read, 1897-98

Daniel L. Sharrar, 1899-1902
Fred E. Smith, 1903-06
Harvey R. Munson, 1907-10
Adelbert P. Lane, 1911-14
Wilbur Nelson, 1915
Gaylord Nelson, 1915-18
W. C. Folkert, 1919
S. A. Evey, 1920-22
Frank R. Howes, 1923-30
Harry C. Rose, 1931
Lucy E. Rose, 1932
Earl Davis, 1933-34
Wm. G. Federspiel, 1935 ---

GRATIOT COUNTY OFFICERS (Continued)

Register of Deeds

Henry Lane, 1856
 Elijah Peck, 1857-62
 Henry P. Howd, 1863-66
 Theodore Nelson, 1867-70
 DeWitt C. Chapin, 1871-73
 On the death of Mr. Chapin, Jan. 1873
 Ella Chapin finished out his term.
 Jas. T. Hall, 1875-76
 Joseph H. Seaver, 1877-80
 Geo. S. Van Buskirk, 1881-82
 John L. Sinclair, 1883-86
 Chester W. Martin, 1887-90
 Wm. T. Pitt, 1891-92

Napoleon B. Bradley, 1893-96
 Frank M. Vandercook, 1897-1900
 Albert H. Lowry, 1901-04
 John C. Watson, 1905-08
 Geo. W. Long, 1909-12
 Bird J. Tucker, 1913-20
 Chas. L. Heisler, 1921-22
 Merle Heisler, 1923-24
 Frank J. Tucker, 1925-32
 Frank G. Palmer, 1933-34
 Frank J. Tucker, 1935-46
 Aubrey Mellinger, 1947 ---

Prosecuting Attorney

Franklin Miller, 1856-58
 Israel B. Coats, 1859-61
 Moses Tompkins, app. on death
 of Mr. Coats in 1861, elected
 1862. (1863-64)
 Wm. E. Winton, 1865-68
 Andrew J. Utley, 1869-70
 Jas. K. Wright, 1871-72
 Chas. E. Williams, 1873-74
 Jas. K. Wright, 1875-76
 Truman W. Whitney, 1877-80
 Chas. J. Willett, 1881-82
 Jas. K. Wright, 1883-84
 Jas. L. Clark, 1885-86
 Byron H. Sawyer, 1887-90
 Jas. Clarke, 1891-92
 Wm. A. Leet, 1893-96
 Newel Smith, 1897-98

Julius B. Kirby, 1899
 Supreme Court decision, throwing
 out Elba township, election of
 1898, gave Archie McCall the
 election and he took possession
 in July 1899, finishing the term.
 Marvin R. Salter, 1903-06
 John M. Everden, 1907-10
 Chas. H. Goggin, 1911-12
 John M. Everden, 1913-14
 O. L. Smith, 1915-22
 Romaine Clark, 1923-28
 Kenneth B. Montigel, 1929-30
 Stanley W. Greene, 1931-34
 Robert L. Arnold, 1935-38
 Robert H. Baker, 1939-42
 Fred H. Passenger, 1943-50
 Kenneth D. Plaxton, 1951 ---

County Supt. of Schools

(School Commissioner)

Giles T. Brown, 1867-71
 Dillis D. Hamilton, 1871-73
 Giles T. Brown, 1873-74
 Orin G. Tuttle, 1893-99
 Retta Peet, 1899-1901

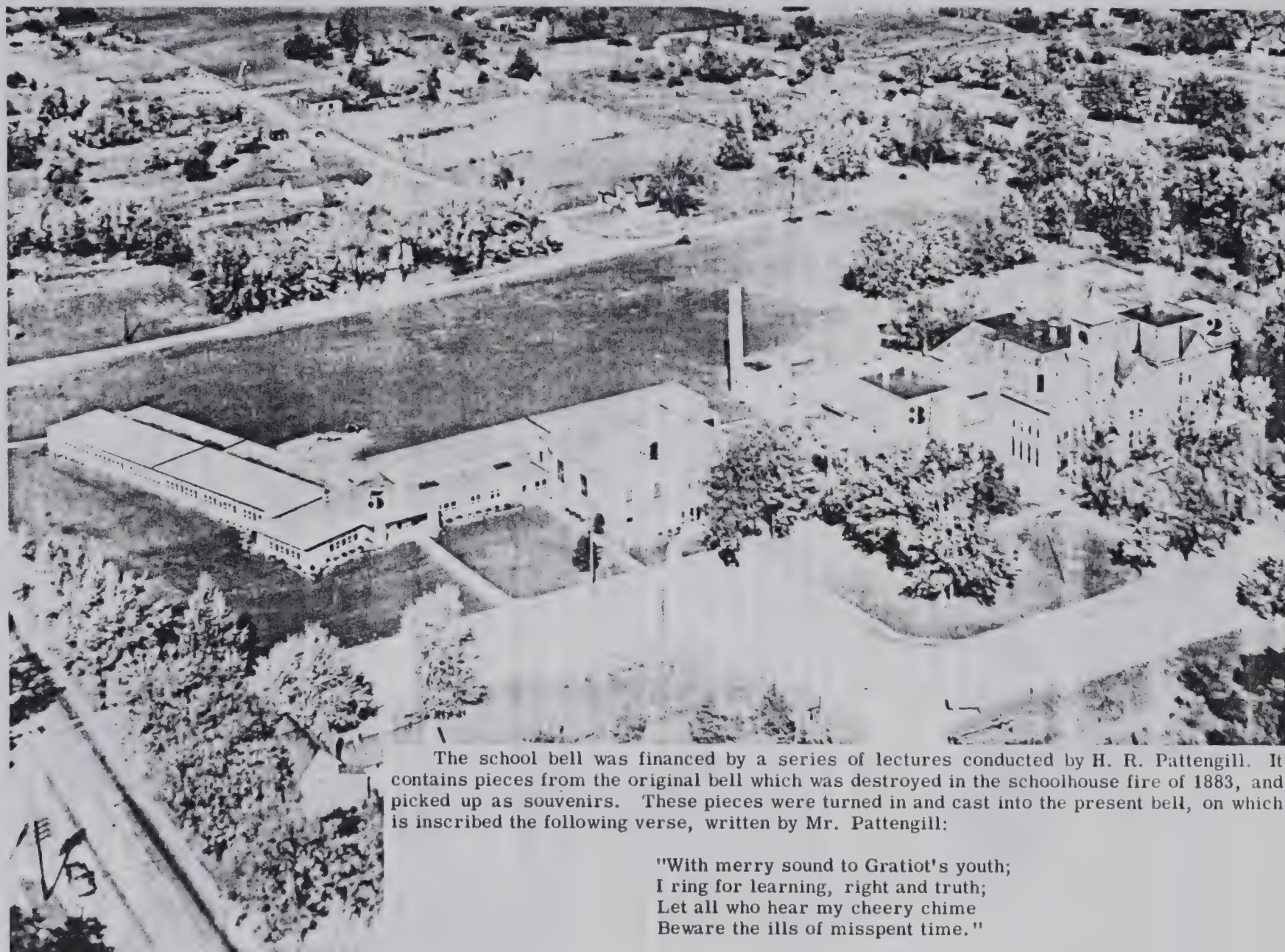
Chas. F. Pike, 1901-11
 Howard A. Potter, 1911-35
 Donald L. Baker, 1935-53
 Alice P. Reed, 1953 ---

Drain Commissioners

Frank Miller, 1857
 Addison Hayden, 1857
 Anson Arnold, 1857
 Francis Nelson, 1858
 Cornelius Holiday, 1860
 Erastus Perry, 1860
 H. T. Barnaby, 1860
 J. B. Smith, 1861
 George W. Jennings, 1861
 Bernard Fox, 1861
 Ervin H. Ewell, 1868
 Cornelius Campbell, 1868
 William Comstock, 1868
 John Jeffery, 1871
 Philip Burlingame, 1871
 D. W. Altenburg, 1872-80
 Thomas H. Harrod, 1881-2
 Samuel C. Robinson, 1883-5
 S. S. Hastings, 1886-1889

A. J. Brown, 1890-91
 J. W. Harrod, 1892-93
 C. S. Barnes, 1894-97
 William Marlin, 1894-97
 James W. Graham, 1894-97
 John Clemons, 1894-97
 J. W. Jackson, 1894-97
 Charles A. Scholtz, 1898-99
 Newton Burns, 1900-01
 Parker Merrill, 1902-05
 E. E. Potter, 1906-09
 Edwin Redman, 1910-13
 Erva Laycock, 1914-22
 Luther Carter, 1923-24
 John Young, 1925-32
 Oliver McEnderfer, 1933-34
 John Young, 1935-36
 Ed Hendershott, 1937-46
 Earl Weaver, 1947 ---

ITHACA Public Schools



The school bell was financed by a series of lectures conducted by H. R. Pattengill. It contains pieces from the original bell which was destroyed in the schoolhouse fire of 1883, and picked up as souvenirs. These pieces were turned in and cast into the present bell, on which is inscribed the following verse, written by Mr. Pattengill:

"With merry sound to Gratiot's youth;
I ring for learning, right and truth;
Let all who hear my cheery chime
Beware the ills of misspent time."

ITHACA SCHOOL SYSTEM 1955

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Original structure 1884 | 3. West wing 1911 |
| 2. East wing 1909 | 4. Gymnasium 1936 |
| 5. Elementary School 1953 | |



ORIGINAL SCHOOL BUILDING 1884

ITHACA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Approximately thirty children of school age were living in Ithaca township in 1857. For this reason the first meeting of the school electors was held at the log courthouse on September 28, 1857. William Potter was elected moderator; Lafayette Church, director, and W. W. Comstock, assessor. It was voted to raise \$250 by tax on the district for the erection of a school house the next season. The entire cost of the school was not to exceed \$500.

It was also voted to collect one dollar a scholar for the support of a school during the following winter. Until the first school could be erected, class sessions were held in the log courthouse which was located near the present Methodist church. The village hall now occupies the site of the first school house. Price for the site was \$30.

A history of the early schools by H. R. Pattengill, who was head of Ithaca schools for seven years and later Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, lists the first teacher as William S. Nelson, winter term, 1857. The summer term was taught by an Olive Dean for \$2 per week. In the winter term of 1858-9 J. Milton Putnam taught a "four months school at \$19 a month, with boarding around and his washing thrown in."

In the early days it was the custom to teach every alternate Saturday or one-half day every Saturday.

The winter term of 1860-61 was taught by Theodore Nelson, later to aid in founding Alma college, to serve as State Superintendent of Public Instruction and finally, to hold the presidency of Kalamazoo.

A one-story frame school house, 28 x 36, built during the summer of 1858 was destroyed by fire in 1861. In this year a two-story frame building was erected, the same size on the ground as the former one, and on the same site. By 1865 more than 100 pupils were enrolled, and so the top story was finished and a second teacher added. In 1873 still more room was needed so a one-story addition was completed, making Ithaca a three-teacher school, primary, intermediate and high school.

School prospered under the new system with the number of pupils increasing to 461 in 1883, and it became necessary to have more room. An infant department was added, using the basement of the Baptist church for the additional room. This arrangement was continued until October 10, 1883, when the school was destroyed by fire.

Meanwhile plans for another school already had begun to take shape. In 1882 the present site at the head of Main Street had been selected and Fred Hollister, a Saginaw architect, drew the plans. The job was let to Fred Kinkerter of Ithaca and H. B. Sunbury of St. Louis January 15, 1883, for \$17,794. The complete cost of the building was \$23,527.49.

The cornerstone of the new school house was laid in June 1883.

Beneath the cornerstone, which is the base of the east column at the center doorway, were placed brief histories of school districts, lists of scholars, papers and coins. Among the latter, to quote from the Gratiot County Journal of the day, were ". . . two five-cent nickels of 1883, one of them of new coinage being a Roman V for a figure 5 . . ."

The formal dedication was May 9, 1884.

In 1887 six students were graduated from high school; by 1900, senior classes ran as high as 20. Family names still familiar in and near Ithaca appear among these early graduates: Barstow, Allen, Chalker, VanDeventer, Brown, Iseman, Mulholland, Mellinger, Beechler, Crandell, Ringle, Kennett.

Because of increasing enrollments it became necessary in 1909 to add the right wing, and in 1911 the left wing was added.

In the thirties a group of far-sighted citizens recognized the possibility of fulfilling a long-felt need for a school gymnasium. Tentative plans were begun to have a Public Works Administration project approved for a new gymnasium. The qualified voters on November 26, 1935, approved a \$20,000 bond issue to help finance the project. The project was completed in 1936 at a total cost of approximately \$30,000 to the district.

From 1883 until 1948 the school heating system was housed in the basement of the original building directly below the classrooms. This was a problem of worry and great concern for many years, as it was dangerous from a fire standpoint and hazardous from the safety angle.

In the summer of 1946 the qualified school electors voted for a \$25,000 bond issue to provide for a central heating system outside the school building. The boiler capacity was made sufficient to take care of future expansion programs. It was at this time the type of fuel used was changed from coal to fuel oil.

Following World War II educational leaders in the community soon began to realize that school census figures were increasing rapidly. A citizens committee was appointed to study the problem. As a result of the study the voters approved a \$300,000 bond issue on April 18, 1951, to finance the construction of a new elementary school. The building consists of twelve classrooms, a kindergarten, superintendent's office, principal's office, book store and storage rooms.

On November 4, 1952, the cornerstone for the new building was laid. An appropriate ceremony was arranged and the following items were placed in the cornerstone: List of faculty and other school employees, list of the members of the Board of Education, name of the contractor and architects, a Holy Bible, copies of the Gratiot County Herald and Detroit Free Press, the date school was started and the month of completion, and three coins of a recent date.

When elementary grades were moved to the new school, classrooms in the high school building were rearranged and refurbished.

Six years ago a cafeteria and kitchen were set up in the basement of the old building; an average of 460 pupils take advantage of the hot lunches daily.

During the 1954-55 school year, 953 pupils were enrolled in Ithaca's school. Six buses were used to transport 255 non-residents and 72 resident pupils to and from classes.

Today's curriculum is a far cry from that of 90-odd years ago. In addition to the basic Three R's, subjects offered in the high school include band, farm shop, homemaking, vocational guidance, public speaking.

An important part of the school plant is McKibben Field, three blocks east of the school campus. The five-acre athletic field had its beginning in the fall of 1929 when Ithaca played Lansing Eastern in football. Although outscored, Ithaca received \$125 for the game, money which was used to start a fund for an athletic field. The teams had been using the fairgrounds and a playground where the gymnasium now stands.

Floyd McKibben, principal, from 1929 to 1934, and superintendent for the next ten years, fostered the idea of the field. After the property was purchased he organized Field Days, when boys and girls - and horses - helped clear the field and put it in shape. The first game was played on September 16, 1932, with Alma.

Known as Alumni Field for the next fifteen years the name was changed to McKibben Field in a re-dedication ceremony on October 10, 1947. Mr. McKibben died suddenly just a month before the ceremony.

Superintendents of Schools

Henry R. Pattengill, 1877	Fred Fullerton, 1919 - died
J. N. McCall, 1885	Louis H. Grettenberger, 1919
Albert P. Cook, 1892	L. O. Hoxie, 1923
E. D. Watkins, 1902	Clyde J. Creaser, 1926
C. J. Collins, 1906	Floyd H. McKibben, 1934
George E. Ganiard, 1907	Earl S. Drehmer, 1944
Frank Knapp, 1909	Reynold E. Mick, 1946
John D. LaRue, 1913	Donald L. Baker, 1953
I. F. King, 1915	



SUPERINTENDENT HENRY R. PATTENGILL



McKIBBEN
FIELD,
opened in 1932
as Alumni
Field and re-
dedicated as
McKibben Field
in 1947.



GYMNASIUM 1936

ELEMENTARY 1953



Churches

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH

The First Methodist church of Ithaca stands on the site of the first Methodist church built in Gratiot county. Through the loyalty, hard work and self sacrifice of Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Russell and other pioneers, the first Methodist Society was organized in Ithaca in 1865. Meetings were held in the school house and later in the Baptist church. The church was built in 1870 and A. W. Hause assigned as pastor.

Membership grew and in 1891 the building was enlarged. In 1896 a pipe organ was installed. A set of chimes was added in 1897. In 1910 extensive alterations and additions were made, including brick veneer. Again in 1948 the interior was changed, including an extension on the north to house the chancel, new pipe organ and choir; and many memorials and special gifts made a beautiful house of worship.

During the early years class leaders, including William Barstow, A. M. Shaw, J. W. Harrod and E. G. VanDeventer, helped hold the groups together.

Many outstanding leaders, among whom were J. N. McCall, C. J. Chambers, Frank Convis, K. S. Searles, O. G. Tuttle, James G. Kress and J. L. Barden, helped make the church a strong influence for good in the community.

The Sunday School, Methodist Youth Fellowship (formerly Epworth League), Women's Society of Christian Service (formerly Ladies Aid) and Methodist Men hold important places in the church fellowship.

Among the twenty-six ministers serving from 1868 to 1955 are found the well-remembered names of Jacokes, Killeen, Cook, Wilcox, Way, Beebe, Dewey, Lathrop, Frye, Dunbar, Slee, Rogers, Warmouth and Winegar, whose labors not only led people to God but helped build Christian fellowship.



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



METHODIST CHURCH

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

The First Presbyterian church of Ithaca was organized February 16, 1870, with seven members. The services were at first held alternately in the Baptist and Methodist churches, but after a few months only the Methodist church was used, meetings being held every other Sunday morning.

In 1878 funds were started for the erection of a church, and a wooden edifice erected on the present site was dedicated June 4, 1882. In 1898 this building was moved to the rear of the lot and the present stone church added, the old part continuing in use for Sunday School classes.

A pipe organ was installed in 1923 and dedicated early in 1924.

A bequest from Miss Maude Wiltse, a generous gift from Mrs. E. D. Hamilton, her daughter, Charlotte, and son, Charles; contributions from various others, and extensive financing by the Westminster Guild made it possible to remodel the church basement in 1952, the modernized rooms being used as a Fellowship Center.

From 1870 to 1955 there have been 1161 names on the church roll.

Fifteen ministers have occupied the pulpit; D. D. Hamilton, 1871-1875; J. T. Willett, 1875-1879; John E. Long, 1880-1896; R. T. Lynd, 1896-1897; A. L. Toner, 1897-1901; Roger M. Williams, 1901-1908; John Q. Duffey, 1908-1915; Roy G. Hershey, 1915-1917; William Roberts, 1917-1922; Roy J. Miller, 1923-1927; H. G. Gaige, 1927-1937; Edward E. Belles, 1937-1947; Calvin Ukena, 1948-1950; Robert VanderHart, 1950-1953; John L. Hurrele, 1953-.

ITHACA BAPTIST CHURCH

The history of the Ithaca Baptist church parallels that of the village. On July 18, 1857, a group of 25 people met at the log courthouse to form the Baptist church in Ithaca. Some Sunday School work already had been started by the Rev. Lafayette Church, who became the second pastor, following the Rev. Israel Fay. The Rev. William Everest preached from 1863 to 1865. Mr. Church again became the pastor on his return from the Civil War.

In the early years church meetings were held in the log school house near the site of the present village hall and an early atlas shows a Baptist church on South Pine River Street. In 1867 a wood frame building, 36 x 60, was built, during the pastorate of the Rev. Theodore Nelson.

On March 13, 1884, the church burned to the ground with a \$400 mortgage against it, and no insurance. The present brick building, at West Center and South Maple Streets, was then erected at a cost of \$7,850.57, and dedicated January 2, 1887. The church bought its first parsonage in 1953. In May 1954 the church voted to become independent of the American Baptist Convention. The Rev. R. Richard Canfield is the present pastor.

Three of the oldest active members of the church are Mrs. George Frisbie, Mrs. Max Ellsworth and Miss Addie Parker. Perhaps the oldest member is Mrs. W. M. Weller, 92.

Names outstanding in Ithaca's history recorded among the early pastors and parishioners, and with windows in the church dedicated in their honor, include John Jeffery, Israel Fay, Lafayette Church, Theodore Nelson and his wife, Cornelia Church Nelson, L. C. Pattengill, J. S. Goodman, S. W. Ambler.



BAPTIST CHURCH

ITHACA SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

The Ithaca Seventh Day Adventist church was organized at Ithaca on January 1, 1865, with Elder I. D. VanHorn presiding. Those attending the meeting "Resolved, that we enter into an organization as a body of believers known as Seventh Day Adventists of Gratiot County, Michigan."

At the second business meeting, thirty-six people established their membership and elected officers. Franklin Squires was elected elder, Francis Nelson, deacon, and Philip P. Allen, church clerk.

A new building was erected at 329 East Newark Street. This original structure burned in 1867. It was rebuilt in 1884 with lumber hauled on sleighs, through deep snow, from the David Stevenson farm near Ola. Mr. Stevenson also gave the lumber for the seats. The seats, still in use, were made by hand within the church building. In 1885 Elder I. D. VanHorn held a dedication service for the completed church building.

In 1896 an Adventist church was built at Ola and thirty-three Ithaca members transferred their letters to Ola.

In 1906 a church school was started in a building on the lot just west of the church with Miss Winifred Tefft as teacher. School was held here until 1917-18; then the building was sold and moved to the Wiltse residence east of the church 1-1/2 blocks.

In 1933 the Ithaca Seventh Day Adventist church joined with the Adventist churches of Alma and St. Louis and established a church school at 117 South East Street, St. Louis, Michigan, with Fred Burkhart of Wisconsin as the teacher. This school will be replaced by the new building, now under construction, one mile south of Ithaca at 235 East Fillmore Road.



SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

ITHACA CHURCH OF GOD

The Church of God had its beginning in Ithaca through the efforts of the late William Kennett and his wife, who in 1918 purchased a lot at the corner of St. Johns and Emerson Streets, where the church is now located.

During that same year a tent meeting, with George Clingenpeel as evangelist, was held on this new location. Before the first building was erected in 1920, Sunday evening services were held in the homes of the late Mrs. Chriss Lehner and the Rev. George W. Lewis, who had assumed pastoral leadership of the group the previous year.

Through the years many revival services were conducted by out-of-town ministers. In 1937 a 12 x 30-foot wing was added to the south side of the Chapel, and in 1940 a similar sized addition was made to the north side to provide for more Sunday School room.

Mr. Lewis served as pastor for 23 years. He was succeeded in January 1943 by the Rev. R. T. Page, who after 19 months in Ithaca was forced to move to a different climate because of the illness of his wife. In October 1944 the church called the Rev. B. C. Van Every of Cadillac to be pastor.

In 1947 the new cinder-block sanctuary was erected, and the congregation continued with steady growth. Mr. Van Every resigned in April 1950, and the Rev. Earl Van Sipe of Petoskey was called as pastor in July of that same year. He is serving with the local congregation at the present time.

Plans are now under way for an additional building program for the Church of God in Ithaca.



ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE CHURCH



CHURCH OF GOD

ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Previous to 1952 the Roman Catholics of Ithaca attended mass at Alma, St. Louis, Carson City or Banister as distance or convenience dictated. However, in 1949 the Rev. Fr. S. A. Van Gessel, together with a lay committee, conferred with the vicar-general of the Saginaw diocese, following which property was purchased for the erection of a church. Due to a shortage of priests, plans were again deferred until in February 1952 when the Rev. Fr. Paul Foster was sent as assistant to Fr. Van Gessel. He immediately took a census of Catholic families and found nearly a hundred. Again permission was applied for, and the then new Bishop Stephen Woznicki, readily granted it.

A store building was rented, cleaned and decorated and on June 1, 1952, Pentecost Sunday, the first mass was said in Ithaca with an attendance of about 200.

In September 1952 Fr. Foster was succeeded by the Rev. Fr. Charles L. Ganley, newly-ordained. Very soon a money-raising project was inaugurated, through which relatives and friends of many faiths were contacted. To their generosity, as well as a gift of \$6000 from the Catholic Church Extension Society of Chicago, the church in Ithaca owes its beginning. Ground was broken by Fr. Van Gessel in May 1953, and work begun on the red brick American colonial style church, with a seating capacity of 300, at a cost of nearly \$50,000.

The cornerstone was laid by Monsignor John Sonefeld June 28, 1953. In August 1953 the first mass was said in the basement of the new church.

On Sunday, November 8, 1953, Fr. Ganley sang the first mass in the almost-completed church, preceded by a blessing of the interior.

Solemn ceremonies combining the day of the dedication and the first confirmation class were held on June 29, 1954, by the Most Rev. Stephen S. Woznicki, with the Rev. Fr. Neil O'Connor giving the sermon.

The attendance as of May 1955 is 400 persons at two masses each Sunday.



FREE METHODIST CHURCH

ITHACA FREE METHODIST CHURCH

In the year 1886, a family of Free Methodists from Arcada township moved to Ithaca, and finding others who were of the same religious belief, persuaded the Rev. Levi Whitham, then pastor of the North Star Free Methodist church, to come among them and form a society. A regular preaching appointment was then established with the North Star pastor being appointed both charges until the time that the North Star church was discontinued.

For seven years the society was without a permanent house of worship, usually meeting in private homes. In 1893, under the pastorate of the Rev. J. N. Williams, a church building was purchased at 117 North Maple Street. In the spring of this same year, at a quarterly meeting with District Superintendent Myron DeVoist, Bishop B. R. Jones dedicated the church to the worship of Almighty God.

When the property was sold in North Star, a parsonage was purchased in the northwestern part of Ithaca, and for years was the home of the resident pastor; however, this property has also been sold, and a more convenient house has been purchased on North Maple Street, within easy access to the church.

ITHACA ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH

When the Rev. and Mrs. Ernest R. Anthony came to Ithaca in July, 1951, they immediately saw the need of an Assembly of God church in this city. Being unable to find a suitable place for starting church services, they decided to build a small home of their own at 801 East Emerson Street, in which services could be held until a future place of worship be found.

The Anthonys obtained approval from the Michigan District Council of the Assemblies of God to have services in their home. The first official Sunday School session was held on February 3, 1952, with a total attendance of eight. The church and Sunday School attendance continued to grow and the congregation saw the need of a church in which to worship.

In July 1952 a house was purchased, dismantled and moved to a lot purchased by the Assemblies of God.

The members of the church and Mr. Anthony built a new church on the site adjoining the pastor's home in the spring of 1953. The building was completed in the early fall of that year, and the congregation moved into its new church September 6, 1953, with 43 in attendance.

After pastoring two years, Mr. Anthony resigned May 1, 1954.

The Rev. Richard Peterson of Crown Point, Indiana, accepted the pastorate June 20 and is serving the church at this time.

There have been a number of major, as well as minor, remodeling projects on the church since its purchase, and at this time a portion under the main auditorium is being excavated for the addition of three more Sunday School rooms.

A partial list of the charter members includes Albert Amspoker, Albatha Amspoker, Clara Ward, Mary Chalker, G. I. Chalker and Nettie Chalker. Albert Amspoker and G. I. Chalker subsequently entered the active ministry in the Free Methodist church.



ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH

Lodges

FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS



DR. H. P. COLE

The first Masonic Lodge to be organized in Gratiot county was instituted on January 12, 1860, when the charter was presented to Ithaca Lodge No. 123, F. & A. M. The first master was William W. Comstock. Other first officers were Elijah Peck, senior warden; L. C. Knapp, junior warden; W. S. Howd, secretary; John Jeffery, treasurer; F. D. Weller, senior deacon; and B. Worthing, junior deacon. Other charter members were John A. Crispell, Oscar A. Everden, and Melancton Pettit.

At the present time, the lodge has a membership of 225.

One of the most distinguished members of the Ithaca lodge was Hazen P. Cole, who served as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Michigan for the term 1948-49. Dr. Cole, who passed away October 26, 1954, was master of the local lodge in 1941. Another outstanding member was Charles G. Graham, who rose high in Masonic circles. In 1910-11 he was Right Eminent Commander Knights Templar of Michigan.

Ithaca Masons own their own building at the corner of East Center and South Main Streets, and rent store and office space on the first and second stories. The business activities of the building are conducted by a Temple association.

Officers serving the lodge for the year 1955 are Arlan Showers, worshipful master; Robert MacDonald, senior warden; Stanley Young, junior warden; Harold Emery, secretary; F. Lloyd Peters, treasurer; Vivian Hall, senior deacon; Robert Dicken, junior deacon; Marshall Hirschman, chaplain; Larry Trexler, senior steward; Lester Hooper, junior steward; and Garold Baker, tyler.

INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS

Rising Star Lodge, No. 151, of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, came into being in Ithaca on January 11, 1871. Like the first lodge of the order in America, which was instituted on April 26, 1819, in an attic room in a Baltimore hotel, Rising Star lodge got its start in the attic room of the hotel then known as the Jeffery house, located on the corner of Center and Pine River Streets.

First officers were L. R. Hiffner, noble grand; N. G. Sutliff, vice grand; Emery Crosby, secretary, and George Mead, treasurer. Others listed as charter members were David Stackhouse and John Kinkerter.

After meeting at several different places for seven years, the lodge purchased property in 1878 on the corner of Main and Emerson Streets, fitted up the upper story for lodge purposes and the lower story for a justice office and wagon shop. That was their home for five years, after which numerous moves were made. In 1900 a building on Center Street across from the court house was purchased and remodeled into a lodge hall.

Fire later destroyed this building, and the lodge purchased the three-story brick building in the business district at 160 East Center Street. The ground floor is occupied by Keffer-Sprague drug store with the second floor as a dining room and the third floor for the lodge room.

Marvin R. Salter, Ithaca attorney, one of its members, was elected Grand Master of Ithaca in 1894. During his term more than 40 Rebekah lodges were instituted, an all-time record.



M. R. SALTER

ORDER OF EASTERN STAR

Ithaca's chapter of the Order of Eastern Star was instituted at the Masonic Temple February 15, 1889, under dispensation by an Ithaca Mason, Chauncy Waterbury, Worthy Grand Patron. Margaret Comstock was appointed worthy matron, and J. N. McCall, worthy patron.

Other officers were Sara L. Brown, associate matron; Nettie Comstock, secretary; Eleanor Barnes, treasurer; Ida Martin, conductress; Nellie Johnson, associate conductress; Maggie McCall, chaplain; James Donaldson, sentinel; Nellie Potts, Ada; Lydia M. Peet, Ruth; Mrs. O. S. Heath, Esther; Mrs. Charles Yost, Martha, and Mrs. Eliza Trask, Electa. The chapter first adopted the name of "Iris," and later changed to "Myrtle."

Ida J. Martin, worthy matron in 1890, later became grand matron of the Grand Chapter of Michigan. One of the most outstanding events in the local O. E. S. history was the entertaining of Grand Chapter in 1891.

In recent years several others have held office in Grand Chapter: Jennie Harris, grand chaplain; Mildred Kernen, grand organist; Paul Kernen, grand soloist, and Elizabeth Helfer, grand representative of Maryland. Several also have been appointed pages and guards at Grand Chapter through the years, and many others have held offices in the Gratiot-Isabella association held each year.

In March 1954 Lawrence Coy, grand patron, and Betty Coy, grand marshal, were presented with honorary memberships here, the first ever to be granted by Myrtle chapter, No. 56, O. E. S. There are now 191 members in the chapter.

REBEKAHS

Crescent Rebekah Lodge, No. 75, was instituted by the Ithaca Odd Fellows on September 13, 1875. Charter members were Mr. and Mrs. George Randall, Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Russell, Mr. and Mrs. E. N. Dubois, Mr. and Mrs. William C. Beckwith and Mr. and Mrs. George Churchill.

In 1897 Lydia M. Peet of the local lodge was elected president of the Grand Lodge. Her greatest ambition for the Order was to see a home erected for children and the aged. Largely through her interest and efforts, the present Odd Fellows home at Jackson, Michigan, was established.



LYDIA PEET

ROTARY CLUB

Ithaca Rotary club celebrated its 20th anniversary this year and joined with 8,400 clubs in 89 countries of the world in observing the Golden anniversary of Rotary International, an organization of business and professional men banded together for mutual helpfulness and fellowship. Founded in Chicago by Paul P. Harris in 1905, Rotary International's program is to foster and encourage the "ideal of service."

The local club was organized with 17 charter members, eleven of whom are still members of the club: Howard Alverson, J. L. Barden, Dr. S. C. Brown, Dr. M. J. Budge, Roland Crawford,

Paul Kernen, Dr. H. F. Kilborn, Lynn T. Miller, Romaine McCall, George McCall and Greig Taft. Watt L. Clise was the first president.

Each spring the club has a tree-planting day in the Gratiot-Saginaw game area. Some evergreens are now 20 feet high. In conjunction with the other three Gratiot clubs they have sponsored an annual Inter-City Town Hall Series which has brought many nationally known persons to this area for programs. They sponsor a Boys State candidate each year and entertain handicapped children at a Christmas party. The club is a 100 percent member of the Rotary Foundation.

Forty-six members are in the club today, and weekly attendance is consistently near 100 percent.

LIONS CLUB

A meeting in the fall of 1950 was the opening sessions for the Ithaca Lions club, when some 20 men officially applied for a charter. Embracing all faiths, Lions club represents almost every profession in Ithaca.

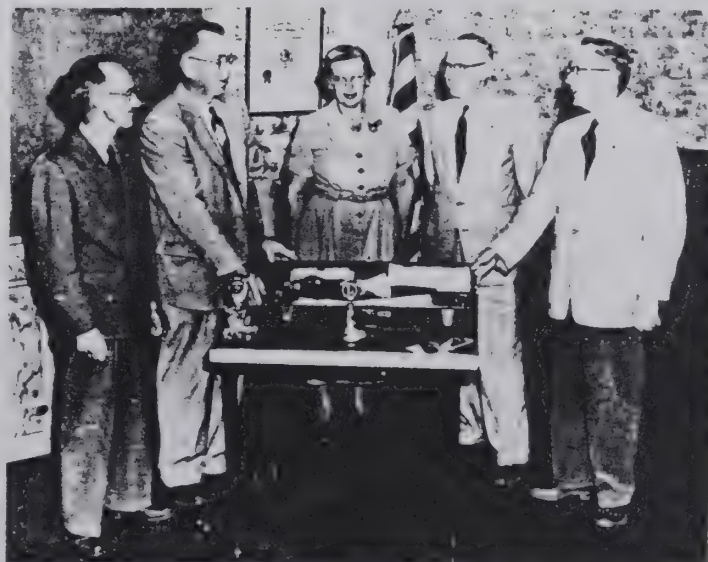
The major project of the Lions is sight-conservation; the purchase of a sight-screening machine for the Ithaca school topped this program. This project has been most successful in detecting defective eyesight among grade children. The Lions have also purchased white canes for the blind.

Other projects have been many and varied. There have been miniature white cane and broom sales to aid the blind, safety Scotch-lighting of bikes, a minstrel show, fall-festival lunch booths and floats, and assistance to "Operation Track," a project to provide a track at McKibben Field. "Offspring Night" and the two "Farmer-Community Visitations" have proved extremely popular.

Charter members are Harold McCormack, first president; Charles R. Billig, Thomas Billig, Gus Blaksmith, Jerry Brodebeck, Bernard Cumming, George Eaton, C. Nyal Flegel, Ernest Goodfellow, Don Gibbs, Cecil Grice, Howard Gruesbeck, Ronald Gruesbeck, Leon R. Gulick, John W. Hodges, Clifford Hegle, Horace Jenkins, Lyle Johnson, Walter J. Laird, James Littell, Jack McClow, Carl Peters, Paul Pressler, Leslie Simmet, Clare B. Stonebrook, Lynn Stoner, Earl L. VanSipe, Robert Wetzell, Guy Weller, Gerald Dewar, Dale Trask, Frank Stone, Glenn Shroyer, R. B. Castle, H. J. Stroupe, John McLoughlin, Carl Anderson, Wilbur Hubbard.



1945 - FIRST PLANTING OF TREES IN SECTION 23, HAMILTON TOWNSHIP. Left to right: S. Betzer, G. Lake, A. Bovee, R. Crawford, C. Milham, J. L. Barden, W. Nestle, E. Davis, kneeling: W. L. Clise, J. Crawford, H. Goodwin, M. J. Budge, S. C. Brown, and I. White.



LIONS CLUB MEMBERS H. McCormack, F. Stone, H. Stroupe present sight-screening machine to the school. Supt. R. Mick, second from left, accepts it as County Nurse E. McDowell looks on, September 9, 1952.

GIRL SCOUTS

The first registered Girl Scout troop in Ithaca was established about 1937 by Mrs. Hazen P. Cole and Mrs. Carroll Betts. Earlier, several groups of girls had participated in some unofficial scouting activities.

Money for the organization was raised by soliciting local merchants. Mrs. Robert Sawyer and Barbara Clark were the first leaders. Approximately 65 girls took part.

In 1943 Mrs. Robert Whaley took over as Scout leader and interested Child Study Club I in sponsoring the program.

The first Brownie troop, junior Scouts, was established in 1945 with Mrs. Clay Martin as leader. Five of the girls in this first troop went all the way through the Brownie and Scout programs and received their Curved Bars, the highest award given in Girl Scouts, in 1953.

The Girl Scout council was established in 1946 under the sponsorship of Child Study Club I, and the one Girl Scout troop was broken up into smaller troops.

In 1949 Mrs. Charles Larry took over as Council director and is still acting in that capacity.

The Girl Scout Silver Cross was awarded by the national organization in 1950 to Barbara Townsend for saving the life of her two-year-old sister.

At the present time there are three registered Brownie troops and four registered Girl Scout troops, representing 135 girls with 13 adult leaders.

BOY SCOUTS

Scouting has been active in Ithaca 40 of the 45 years since the Boy Scouts of America was organized. The Rev. Roy G. Hersey, pastor of the Presbyterian church, organized the first troop in Gratiot county in 1915.

The first troop grew to be the largest in the state with a membership of more than 100, and held recreational meetings six days each week, after school and evenings. The entire movement was financed by public subscription and was directed by a troop council of 20 businessmen. The headquarters and gym was the entire third floor of the building occupied by Keffer-Sprague drug store.

Scouting has continued in Ithaca since that time under able leadership and in 1928, as a single troop, they affiliated with the Saginaw Council. The first local council was Watt Clise, the Rev. Glenn Frye, Corliss Miller, Warren Stahl. Watt Clise remained close to Ithaca Scouting until his death in 1954.

There are now two scout troops in Ithaca, one under the sponsorship of the Methodist church, with Gerald Pease as scoutmaster, and one under the sponsorship of the Church of God, with Leonard Wight as master.

CUB SCOUTS

In 1951, through the efforts of the Rev. Robert VanderHart, the Presbyterian church sponsored the first Cub Scouts in Ithaca. The pack affiliated with the Saginaw Valley Trails Council, and with outstanding leadership, the pack has grown to nearly 50 active cubs during the few years since their organization.

The cub's first council chairman was Willard Dilts, and Hampton Stroupe was cubmaster during the first three years. James Chilcoat is the present cubmaster.



GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC

Gratiot county was represented in more than twenty Michigan regiments in the Civil War, and it was only natural that a strong Grand Army of the Republic post would result here when that national organization was formed.

The Moses Wisner Post, No. 101, was organized January 13, 1883; it was named for Michigan's governor of 1859-60. The post was very active, and by the late fall had accumulated material to build a hall just south of the southeast corner of Pine River and Emerson Streets. This building served as a meeting place for the post and its auxiliary, the Women's Relief Corps, until it was destroyed by fire in July 1890.

The post held meetings in various upstairs rooms in the business district until finally the membership was too small to hold meetings. The total membership through the years was 308, but active membership in 1913 had dwindled to 30. The post was never officially disbanded or the charter turned in, but it just seemed to fade away.

The last Civil War veteran in the village of Ithaca was Emerson Cortright, who lived at 112 East South Street. A member of the 6th Michigan Cavalry, he passed away November 23, 1930, at the age of 90.

SONS OF UNION VETERANS

No definite organization or activities are known of the Sons of Union Veterans, but several notices were recorded in newspapers published in the 1880's of meetings of the "Wilbur Nelson post, Sons of Union Veterans" held in the village.

VETERANS OF OTHER WARS

War of 1812

Two veterans of the War of 1812 are buried in the Ithaca cemetery: Abner Hunt of Ithaca and Abram Butterfield of Newark township.

Mexican War

No records are available of veterans of the Mexican War of 1846-48.

Spanish-American War

Forty-one Gratiot county men were represented in the Spanish-American War, most of whom were members of Company H, of the 35th Regiment. Only one of these, John M. Shirely of Ithaca, is living today.

WOMEN'S RELIEF CORPS

The Women's Relief Corps, a patriotic organization founded by women relatives of soldiers of the Civil War, was organized here October 4, 1886, as the Moses Wisner Relief Corps of Ithaca.

The W. R. C., an auxiliary to the Grand Army



MOSES WISNER POST NO. 101 Grand Army of the Republic parading on Memorial Day 1913. Commander A. S. Loomis is man nearest camera in front row.

of the Republic, assisted that group by furnishing clothing, bedding and extra food to individual needy old soldiers, their widows and orphans. Every Decoration Day the ladies helped with the program and put flowers on each soldier's grave. One of the fine and lasting things they did here was to buy standards for flags for every soldier buried in the Ithaca cemetery.

The local W. R. C. disbanded and sent in their charter to headquarters about 1925.



COLONEL NATHAN CHURCH



JOHN SHIRELY



ORIN RIKER



D. C. FURGASON

AMERICAN LEGION

In March 1919 a group of American soldiers of World War I met in Paris, France, and organized the American Legion. In 36 years the organization has grown to more than 4,000,000 members.

On February 14, 1920, more than 50 World War I veterans of Ithaca vicinity met in the old Armory located at 112 West Center Street in Ithaca, and formed Post Number 237, which was named after Ithaca's first fallen hero, Orin Riker.

Officers of the new post were Roland J. Crawford, commander; Chester R. Pettit, adjutant; Miles A. Nelson, vice commander; Emery Freeman, finance officer; and David Summerville, historian.

L. W. Wolfe and Walter O. Brown each served two terms as commander, and Roland J. Crawford served one term as adjutant and Howard Burchard, three terms. The meetings were discontinued in 1924, and the charter cancelled May 13, 1927.

Eleven years later, in 1938, thirty World War I veterans gathered in the village hall in Ithaca and formed the second Orin Riker post, Number 328. Harry Johnson was elected commander; Chester R. Pettit, adjutant, and Clarence McAdam, finance officer. At a later meeting Carl Siebert was named sergeant-at-arms and William J. Hodges, chaplain.

A temporary charter was issued May 19, 1938, and a permanent charter February 18, 1939. Approximately eight of the original post members had retained membership in the organization by joining the post at St. Louis.

The post commanders have been Harry Johnson, 1938-39; Russell Allen, 1940; Howard Burchard, 1941; Howard Townsend, 1942; Aubrey Mellinger, 1943-44; C. P. Pressley, 1945; William G. Federspiel, 1946; Lionel Furgason, 1947; Merlin Hamilton, 1948; Charles Helfer, 1949; Kenneth Peters, 1950; Gerald K. Dewar, 1951-52; Robert Atkinson, 1953; Frank Smith, 1954; and Harold Bailey, 1955.

For many years Gerald Woodley, disabled World War I veteran, has competently filled the office of Service Officer and has assisted many to receive veterans benefits.

The post has had three homes during its existence. The first was opened in 1938 in the building at the rear of the Thompson Home Library. The second was in Brown's Opera House building, and the third in the Spooner home, which was purchased and moved to a site one mile south of Ithaca.

The post has furnished three district officers: Gerald Dewar, 8th district commander in 1955; Frank Smith, 8th district adjutant, 1955; and Kenneth Peters, 8th district sergeant-at-arms 1952. Two district meetings have been held in Ithaca.

In 1946 a resolution was adopted to change the name of the post to the Riker-Furgason post, and a permanent charter in this name was issued January 16, 1946. D. C. Furgason was the first Ithaca boy to be killed in World War II.

Major projects of the post have been paying the expenses of a boy each year to the Wolverine Boys State at Lansing, sponsoring oratorical contests, purchasing and loaning hospital equipment for use in the home, aiding needy veterans, helping junior baseball teams, organizing blood banks, assisting Boy Scouts, and participating in Memorial Day services.

The Riker-Furgason post was instrumental in the organization of the Gratiot County Council, which has brought the posts of the county in closer association for good fellowship and veteran problems.

PATRIOTIC CELEBRATION

1917



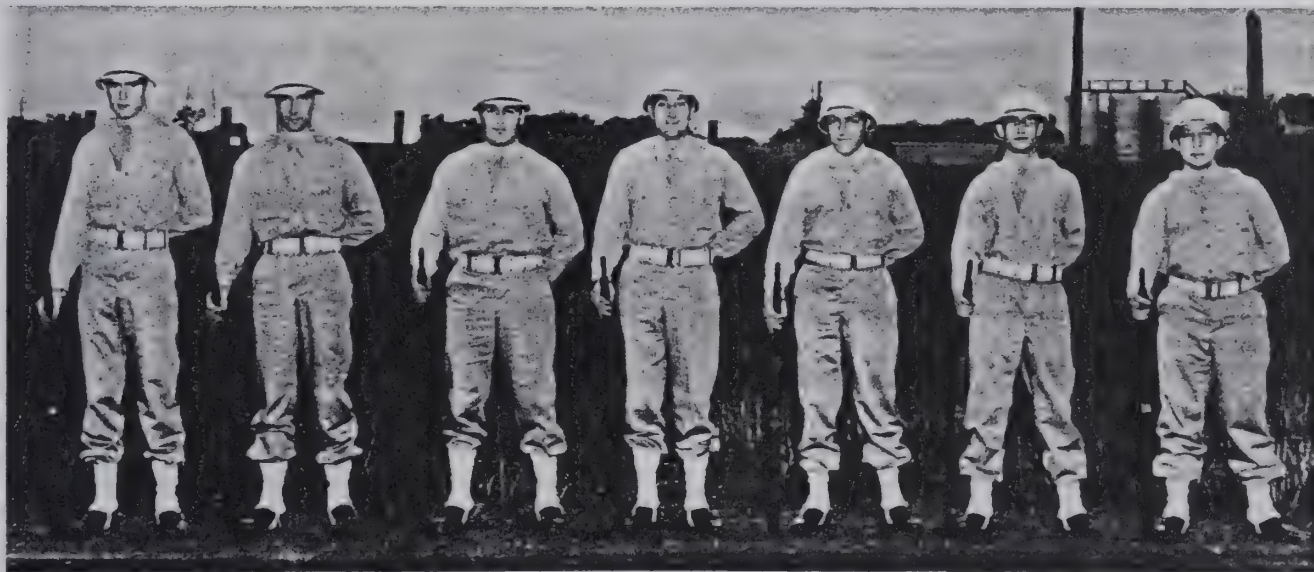
THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

The Veterans of Foreign Wars, Gratiot Post No. 7805, received its charter on July 1, 1946. Commanders of the post have been Howard Fortney, Lloyd Peters, Cloyd Heath, Robert Bartshe, Franklin Klein, Robert MacDonald, Jack McCLOW and at present, Gerald Peet.

The post became incorporated April 2, 1950, and was awarded a citation for membership May 31, 1954, under leadership of Jack McCLOW. In June 1954 the post received an award from VFW headquarters for sale of poppies.

Club rooms on the third floor of the Ideal Theatre building at 118 East Center Street were opened for the VFW and auxiliary at the time Franklin Klein was commander. Members renovated a meeting room and kitchen, installed a small dance floor, put in new ceilings and fluorescent lights. The auxiliary furnished the kitchen.

Among the most recent projects of the local post was a talent show as a benefit to the national V. F. W. home at Eaton Rapids, Michigan.



VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS firing squad, 1947 or 1948. Left to right, L. Jolls, N. Riggs, E. Cook, W. Seamon, L. Flegel, R. Bartshe, L. Gould.

AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY



MEMORIAL AT CEMETERY

BLUE STAR MOTHERS OF MICHIGAN, CHAPTER 111

Motivated by the thought that mothers of men in the armed forces of the United States might find comfort and information from each other in meeting together, an invitation was extended by the Rev. James A. Rogers to meet at the Methodist church in Ithaca to form a club. A small group of mothers responded, and plans for a service organization were discussed at the first meeting in August 1943.

At a subsequent meeting, notices were mailed out to mothers whose eligibility and addresses were known. The following month, the group became affiliated with the Blue Star Mothers of Michigan, as Chapter 111. The Chapter elected officers annually, and met regularly until 1947, the presidents being Mrs. M. J. Haley, Mrs. William Nestle, Mrs. Emma Smith and Mrs. William Probst.

Service to men in the armed forces and to their families became the watchword of the mothers. The projects carried out were the purchase of three wheel chairs for use in the Veterans Facility, contributing to a Veterans Cemetery Fund, helping to keep filled the cookie crocks at the veterans hospitals, sending Christmas packages and Christmas and birthday cards to men in service, presenting Gold Star pins to mothers of deceased veterans, and naming Mrs. Edward Klein as Honor Mother of the Chapter. Mrs. Klein had six sons in the service at one time.

The group's most ambitious project was raising the money for a countywide Roll of Honor and securing the names of all service men for it. This Honor Roll was erected on the courthouse lawn, and later dismantled and replaced by a permanent Memorial. There each year in spring an urn is filled with flowers in memory of those who gave their lives for freedom.

The Ithaca American Legion Auxiliary, Unit 328, Department of Michigan, was organized November 28, 1938, by ten members, receiving a charter May 13, 1939. Membership increased to twenty-two under the able leadership of the first president, Mrs. Mildred Johnson, who served two years.

In 1939 the first rummage sale was set up, proving so successful financially that it continued to be held each spring and fall. Proceeds from the sales were used to help in community projects, most important being construction of a tennis court on the Ithaca school grounds, the Veterans Memorial near the Court House, and furnishing of the mothers' room at the Public Rest Rooms. Yearly contributions have been made to Red Cross, March of Dimes and other social agencies. The Auxiliary sends a girl to Girls State each year and is instrumental in getting other organizations to send girls also.

Locally, shoes, eye-glasses and milk have been given to children in need, as well as food, bedding and clothing to families in distress. The Christmas project of giving to needy children through the school is a major child welfare item each year.

Five hundred American Legion Poppies were sold in 1939, with 2500 sold in 1954. Funds from these sales have been used exclusively for child welfare, rehabilitation for service men and families, contributions to the Otter Lake Billet for veterans' orphans, and gifts to the bedridden who are without relatives at the American Legion hospital at Battle Creek and the VA hospital at Saginaw.

Total membership through the years has been about 90, with present members numbering 55.

On December 31, 1949, a new charter was received, with the Post's new name, Riker-Furgason Post 328.



MEMORIAL AT COURT HOUSE

VFW AUXILIARY

A group of women met in Ithaca May 18, 1948, to organize an auxiliary to Gratiot Post 7805, Veterans of Foreign Wars, with the purpose of aiding veterans and their families and trying to make their community a better place in which to live.

The institution of the auxiliary took place June 2, 1948, at Muscott's Hall. Mrs. Blanche Fall of Saginaw Post 1566 instituted the auxiliary and installed the following officers: Lois Barden, president; Arlene Rozen, senior vice president; Agnes Bartshe, junior vice president; Virginia Reed, secretary; Arlene Riedel, treasurer; Pearl Pearson, chaplain; Kathleen Peters, conductress; Eleanor Seamon, guard; Arlene Roberts, Gladys Peters and Annabel Peet, trustees; Lola Johnson, Mildred Clagg, Virginia Williams, Wilma Johnson, color bearers; Annabel Peet, flag bearer; Virginia Lumsden, banner bearer; Twilah Hanover, historian; Arlene Hardman, patriotic instructor; Helen Bator, musician.

Other charter members were Frances Coleman, Mary Ebright, Alice Gould, Betty Iles, Mary Klein, Rose Klein, Matele Leemgraven, Evelyn Parling, Marcia Reist, Dorothy Russell and Margaret Wheeler.

One of the projects of the auxiliary is the V. F. W. National Home near Eaton Rapids, Michigan, where widows and orphans of deceased or disabled veterans are cared for. This home is a 640-acre farm, with its own hospital, library, gymnasium, community center, nursery and chapel. The children live in family groups under care of house-mothers, and attend the public school and churches of their choice. The home is supported by V. F. W. posts and auxiliaries all over the United States.

The Auxiliary's purpose is stated: "Honor the dead by helping the living."

DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Jean Torrence Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, was organized September 21, 1921. A total of 111 names have been on the membership roll. Jean Torrence, for whom the chapter was named, was the wife of John Watson, a soldier of the Revolutionary War; they were great-grandparents of Mrs. J. N. McCall, charter member of the chapter. Twelve descendants of Jean Torrence were members at one time.

The chapter has contributed to the objects of the society by giving cash to the two D.A.R.-owned schools, Kate Duncan Smith School in Grant, Alabama, and Tamasse School in Tamasse, South Carolina, as well as used clothing for resale to these and other mountain schools, and to schools for Indian girls. The chapter has helped young people to obtain an education through contributions to Student Loan and Scholarship funds. Members of the D.A.R. also attend naturalization courts, giving to the new citizens flags and manuals containing information of interest.

Annually the local chapter sponsors girls from three high schools in a nationwide Good Citizen contest. Three hundred girls from throughout the state compete in the contest, the winner receiving from the state society a government bond for one hundred dollars. These girls are seniors, outstanding in dependability, service, leadership and patriotism.

The chapter marked in 1929, with a boulder in Woodland Park, the place where an Old Indian Trail passed through Ithaca, and which later was the route over which mail was carried from Maple Rapids to St. Louis. It was over this trail that the first white settlers came to Gratiot county.

In addition the chapter has prepared and placed for reference in genealogical libraries, historical information from unpublished sources, such as the court house, churches, Bibles, letters and personal records of general interest.

ITHACA WOMEN'S CLUB

The Ithaca Women's Club was organized in 1918 as a study group under the name of Ithaca Delphian Society.

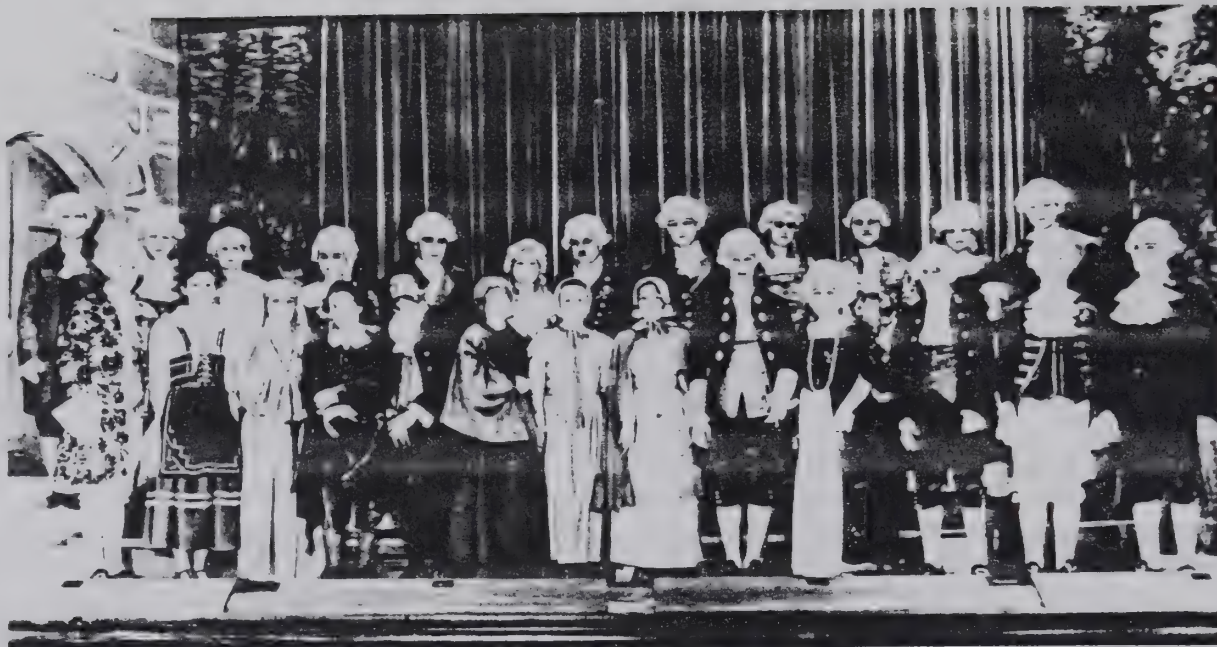
In May 1941 members voted to affiliate with the National Federation of Women's Clubs. The newly-organized club first met September 22, 1941, with 32 members, and the present name was adopted in November of that year. Mrs. Glen Hunsicker was the first president of the re-organized group.

Objectives of the club stress community service as well as cultural advancement and social activity. An example of this community effort is the furnishing of the public lounge and rest rooms by the club in cooperation with the Mothers Service club. The building was built by the village in May 1950.

A project promoted by the club since 1950 is a proposed log cabin for use by community groups in Ithaca's Woodland Park. Funds for the project are being raised by contributions, tag days, various club sales and parties.

The Ithaca club received statewide recognition in 1947 through Mrs. Roland Crawford when she composed the club song, "Live Intelligently." It was adopted as the Federation song at the state convention that year.

Recognition also came to the club in 1949 in a "Build a Better Community" contest sponsored by the National Federation of Women's Clubs. In 1950 the organization received top award in a "You Be The Editor" national contest sponsored by the Country Gentleman.



THE TWO ORPHANS

THE ITHACA THESPIANS
ANNOUNCE THE
REVIVAL OF "NEVADA"
OR
"THE LOST MINE"

Presenting
Miss Goldie
Kille



in the
Leading Role
of Moselle

Giving a true
picture
of these

God fearing
people at
their best

Given under the auspices of the Ithaca Base Ball Team
Ithaca Opera House

One Night Only
THURSDAY January 7

OPERA HOUSE, ITHACA

To-Night--March 8, 1887

"THE ITHACA THESPIANS"

In the Three Act Border Drama, entitled, The

EMIGRANT'S DAUGHTER

Exclusively Presented by

CAPT. DAN DEVINE, Capt. of the Coyotes - W. R. WIGHT

PROF. A. B. SKIFF, Great American Character Reader and Phreno-
logical Scientist

BLACK EAGLE, The Lone Chief

SAW BUTT, The Scout

ACOTIN FINE, The Emigrant Guide

PATRICK O'NEAL, a Housekeeper

CAPT. RALPH TOWN, Capt. Gov. Troop

COL. W. M. COTTELL, The Emigrant

THE EMIGRANT'S DAUGHTER, Mrs. A. B. SCATTERGOOD

BRIDGET O'NEAL, a Disciple of Woman's Right

PRINCE SPIRIT, Queen of Mysteries

Coyotes, Soldiers and Indians.

The Proceeds of these Entertainments to be
Used in Purchasing Costumes. Wins

Church's Opera House!

TO-NIGHT--MARCH 9, 1887!

—The Ithaca—
THESPIANS

NEVADA

(OR)
The Lost Mine

Replete with Startling Situations, Thrilling In-
cidents, Fun, and Full of Interest
from Beginning to End.



THE RETURN OF THE MOTHER, DISGUISED AS THE NURSE.



ELIZA'S ESCAPE ACROSS THE ICE FILLED OHIO RIVER!—ACTUAL SCENES

PLANTATION DAYS AS THEY EXISTED DURING THE CIVIL WAR!

ITHACA DRAMATIC CLUBS

Amateur theatrical clubs in Ithaca may have pre-dated 1879; available records, however, begin with that date. Various groups were active intermittently until about 1940.

The Gratiot County Journal describes in detail a performance in March 1879 by a then newly organized dramatic club of "The Fireman," produced with admirable appropriateness for the benefit of the village hook-and-ladder company in "the new hall over S. J. Thoenen's warehouse." Scenery for this production was painted by E. R. Savage. The cast included Eva Smith, C. V. Bostwick, James Lewis, Virgil Sutliff, Winnie Hilbourn, Walter Hilbourn, Fred Beers and Will Savage.

The following year the club presented "Among the Breakers." The press report of this performance states naively that ". . . the club did very well under the circumstances, especially on the last evening, and just about paid expenses." What the circumstances under which the club labored were, the report failed to say.

"Libby Prison" was given in February 1885 by the following cast: George Maxwell, W. R. Wright, Frank Sutliff, Rose Morrison, Mrs. A. B. Scattergood, and Fred Fox. This play was staged as a benefit for the local post of the G. A. R.

In November 1885 the club reorganized under the name "The Thespians" and produced "Nevada," or "The Lost Mine," a melodrama by George Baker. In December the club presented "The Soldier Tramp," or "Sworn Comrades," also by George Baker, at Church's Opera House.

The performances of two plays - one "The Emigrants," the other a revival of "Nevada" - scheduled by "The Thespians" for two consecutive evenings early in March 1887 were postponed because of a disastrous boiler explosion in Thompson's mill. The performances were eventually given for the benefit of the explosion sufferers. Appearing in the plays were W. R. Wright, Mrs. A. B. Scattergood, Archie McCall, Fred Russell, Nettie Brown, Silas Steele, W. L. Hilbourn, Guy Randall, Mrs. W. R. Wright and Ella Scott.

There are no further records of amateur theatrical activities until 1905. In March of that year the play "Nevada" was again presented as a Woodmen Lodge benefit, with the following cast: Archie McCall, Miss Kent, C. D. Peet, H. B. Parrish, Fred Munson, Cleve Pullen, Clyde Pinney, James Peet, Mrs. Chester Rogers and Cora Burk.

"The Girl of the Golden West," directed by Fred Hoffman, was presented at the Ithaca Opera House in February 1909 with the following cast: H. B. Parrish, Minnie Griswold, Russell Parrish, C. D. Peet, J. O. Peet, Walter Todd, Gladys Marquette, Della Brown, Ethel Searl, Joe Cihak, Rolla Doan, and Robert Russell.

In 1915 "The Thespians" reorganized and presented another revival of that perennial favorite of Ithaca dramatic clubs, "Nevada." The cast: Robert Sawyer, Russell Taylor, Walter Brown, Mark McGill, Goldie Kille, Harry Johnson, Paul Kernen, Fred Crozier, Silas Pardee, Esta Rayburn and Gladys Miller.

Several plays under the direction of William Carr were staged during the early 1920s, but records of these productions are not available.

In November 1931 the then newly organized Ithaca Dramatic Club presented the comedy "Thank You" at Brown's Opera House.

This organization remained active for about ten years, producing several ambitious and demanding plays. All productions were well - and in some cases lavishly - staged and costumed. During this period one operetta, "Hulda of Holland," was presented, and on two or three occasions several one-act plays, some of which were written by members of the club, were staged. All plays were given in Brown's Opera House until 1937; after that time the school gymnasium was used.

The melodrama "East Lynne," adapted from the book by Mrs. Henry Wood, was the vehicle chosen for presentation in March 1932. The following excerpt is from the Alma Record: "In the performance of the revival of this drama the Ithaca Dramatic club displayed a marked example of sincerity, faithfully presenting the play as it was produced in the city of Boston, Mass., in the year 1866."

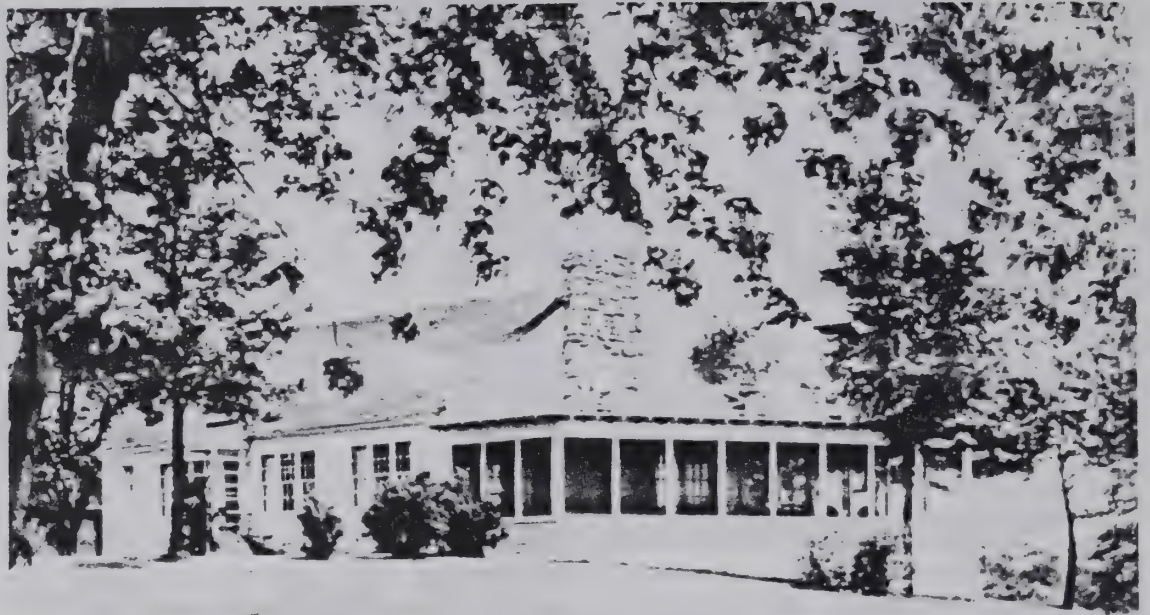
"Uncle Tom's Cabin" followed in November 1932. The club staged this play lavishly with excellent rented scenery and costumes.

The club's next large production, in 1937, was a revival of the French melodrama "The Two Orphans." This play was once a co-starring vehicle for Lillian and Dorothy Gish under the title "Orphans of the Storm."

In 1939 the club produced "The Fool" by Channing Pollock. This play was unusually well-directed, well-acted, beautifully staged, and cordially received by capacity houses. Club members' satisfaction in an exceptionally fine production was marred by a serious accident to Mrs. Stewart Knapp after the second-night performance.

"The Fool" was undoubtedly the most ambitious of all plays produced by the "Ithaca Dramatic Club" during its ten-year period of activity: it was also, regrettably, the club's last major production.

Recreation



ITHACA COUNTRY CLUB

A thriving nine-hole golf club, known as the Gratiot Country Club, is located on the east side of US-27, one mile and a half north of Ithaca.

Organized in 1922 with a membership of 44, the club now has a membership of about 100. Charter members of the club were Dr. and Mrs. Carl Ranger, Mr. and Mrs. C. R. Pettit, Mr. and Mrs. Watt Clise, Mr. and Mrs. N. E. Gibbs, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Russell, Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Mathews, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Fleming and Dr. and Mrs. C. E. Burt.

The county fairground was rented for \$25 a season, and each member paid \$2 a month for dues. A six-hole golf course was laid out; in order to have nine holes, numbers 4, 5 and 6 were played over again.

The cups were made from coffee cans and the sockets out of buggy wheel hubs. There were no sand traps, no bunkers, no water. What grass there was had to be mowed with a regular mower. The women made the flags which waved gaily in the breezes over the coffee cans.

In 1923 the Ketcheson farm north of town was purchased by the organization. In August of that year the members started to build a real golf course. Stones were picked up and piled, roots were dug out, fertilizer was hauled in.

The first year of play only the north half was available for use; the south half, having been under cultivation, had to be seeded.

Through the first years greens and tees were cared for by the membership. For several years the club was without water for the greens. After three or four years a well was put down a few feet from the stand-pipe, but it proved inadequate. This well is under the building now used for woodshed. The following year a 180-foot well was drilled, making water available for all purposes.

In 1933 George Davis and Fred Stafford fostered the idea of a clubhouse. A meeting was called, the matter voted upon and Mr. Davis put in charge of construction.

Most of the kitchen equipment was purchased by the ladies organization.

The first trophy cup, now in the possession of Mrs. Carl Ranger, has five names engraved upon it: Dr. Carl Ranger, three times; Rill Ginther and Watt Clise. Because these names filled the cup, J. L. Barden presented the club with another trophy which is kept each year by the club champion. Many fine players have their names on this award.

The ladies have a plaque upon which names of the annual club tournament winners appear.

In recent years the club has also held junior championships.

Because much of the work is done by members, the club has retained an enthusiasm and pride in its grounds and clubhouse seldom found in larger clubs.



CENTRAL MICHIGAN RIFLE AND PISTOL LEAGUE CHAMPIONS 1952-1953. Back row left to right - F. Butrick, E. Muscott, E. Weaver, B. Sterns, T. Berry, F. Kellogg, P. Andrews, E. Wickman, D. Muscott, Front row - D. Ditto, E. Burr, P. Rayburn, L. Chalker, D. Beck, I. Netzley, M. Eicher.

THE ALAN P. GOODRICH RIFLE AND PISTOL CLUB

The Alan P. Goodrich Rifle and Pistol Club was organized under the National Rifle Association on October 13, 1947, with 25 charter members. Goodrich was a young Ithaca sportsman, who died earlier that year.

The club team has taken an active part in the Central Michigan Rifle and Pistol League every year since it was organized. It won the Central Michigan Championship Trophy for the years of 1952 and 1953.

It also sponsors two junior rifle clubs: The Target Teers, a junior girls club, and the boys Junior Rifle Club. Both were chartered in 1949. There are 31 members in the senior club and fifteen in the junior clubs.

Linn Chalker was very active in organizing the junior clubs.

ITHACA GUN CLUB

During the late months of 1944 a group of sportsmen in and around Ithaca had taken up the sport of fox hunting in Gratiot county and decided to organize a fox hunting club, with the club to receive all the bounties. Several meetings were held that fall.

During the years following the end of World War II the club grew to a membership of 350, with members from all over Gratiot county plus St. Johns, Lansing, Grand Rapids, Pontiac, Detroit and Washington, D. C.

Fox hunting has continued to be the main sport of the club during the winter months, with bobcat hunting and Blue Rock shooting intermingled.

Annual affairs enjoyed by the members are game suppers when there is sufficient supply, oyster suppers and fish fries.



ITHACA GUN CLUB



THOMPSON HOME LIBRARY

THOMPSON HOME LIBRARY

The Ithaca Ladies Library Association was organized in April 1876 for "... the diffusion of knowledge and intellectual culture or literary pursuits."

The association charged \$1.00 initiation fee to ladies desiring membership, 50 cents to juvenile members. Gentlemen could become honorary members by paying the higher fee; they had no voting rights.

The library was open Saturdays from three to five o'clock in the home of the current librarian. Fines for overdue books were ten cents per week or any part of a week.

The thirteen original members of the library association probably had a public library in mind when they organized their group, but the association went out of existence later.

It was on November 26, 1925 - almost 50 years later - that the Ithaca Public Library as we know it today came into being.

On that date the Ithaca Civic League met at the home of Mrs. John McKinney. Officers were Mrs. McKinney, president; Mrs. Watt Clise, vice-president; Mrs. George Lamphere, secretary, and Mrs. Frank Convis, treasurer; The group decided that during the coming year their project would be the establishing of a public library in Ithaca.

The league approached the village council with plans for a public library. The council agreed to provide rooms rent free and furnish heat and lights.

Members of the first library board were Mr. and Mrs. Miles A. Nelson, Mrs. Frank Iseman, H. A. Potter, Mrs. W. L. Clise and Mrs. John McKinney. The first book committee was Mrs. Howard Potter, Glenn Frye, L. O. Hoxie and J. N. Barnhart.

Six months later the reading room of the new public library in the village hall was formally opened.

Three hundred used books had been donated by citizens of Ithaca and three hundred by the State Library.

Mrs. Agnes MacArthur served as librarian, assisted by volunteer help from the Civic League. The project was financed the first year by donations and monthly pledges raised by the league.

In the spring of 1927 a special election was held to vote a one-mill tax for maintenance and support of the library. League members went from door to door to get out the votes in favor of the tax, and the proposal passed.

The library continued to grow for four more years. Just when it was about to burst at the seams, Mrs. Annis S. Thompson willed her home to the village in memory of her husband, William T. Thompson, and her daughter, Beulah Thompson Parrish, to be used as a public library and to be known as the Thompson Home Library.

Mrs. MacArthur served as librarian for ten years. When Mrs. MacArthur died in 1936, Mrs. Earl Williams (Yula Pressley) was appointed, and for the next 14 years the library enjoyed a steady growth under her leadership.

Mrs. Williams resigned from the library in 1950. Mrs. Hazen P. Cole was named her successor and has been librarian for the past five years.

From the outset the growth of the library has been phenomenal. In 1954 loans totalled 27,660. There are 11,500 books and 62 current periodicals available.

The recent gift of \$5000 by the late Miss Maude Wiltse is another factor toward making the library an outstanding one for a village of this size, and of which the people are justifiably proud.



INTERIOR OF LIBRARY



ITHACA WOODLAND PARK. Indian trail marker at right.

WOODLAND PARK

Woodland Park, located at the western edge of the village on West Center Street, was once known as Winton's Woods and used as a park; it was purchased from William Winton by Mrs. W. F. Thompson May 13, 1911.

Some time later, a group of citizens negotiated with Mrs. Thompson, and on May 16, 1916, the land was deeded to C. G. Graham, J. B. Crawford and Charles M. Brown for the sum of \$1500.

On June 12, 1916, the above mentioned parties deeded the land to the Woodland Park Association to be used by the village as a park.

One of the first activities was the establishment of a band stand. One that had been in use at Church's beech grove in the northeast part of town was moved into the park, and seats were arranged on a hillside by placing boards on tile set on end.

Band concerts were held at frequent intervals. In time the concerts were discontinued and a shuffle board was set up on the cement platform. At the present time it is being used for basketball.

Out-door fireplaces have been built, and tables and benches are available for picnics and reunions. Occasionally a tourist parks his trailer for a week or two.

Early settlers came into Ithaca over an old Indian Trail which passed through the park and over which mail was carried from Maple Rapids to St. Louis. This trail was marked in 1929 by a boulder placed by Jean Torrence Chapter, Daughters of American Revolution.



ITHACA CEMETERY

The cemetery is located near the northwest corner of Ithaca. The cemetery association was organized in 1863 with 13 members. W. W. Comstock was president; W. C. Beckwith, clerk, and Elijah Peck, treasurer.

The first body interred was that of Mary Nelson, a daughter of the Rev. Francis Nelson, September 1864.

The cemetery association was transferred from the Association to Ithaca township in 1938. Several acres of land on the south and north of the original plat have been added, making a total of about 18 acres.

Some of the improvements made in recent years have been the mausoleum, built in 1917, curbing of drives, a tool house and a steel picket fence on the east side.

In March 1951, a little more than a half acre was deeded to Dr. F. R. McNabb for purpose of building a home; he in return deeded to the village thirteen acres on the northeast side, where 2500 spruce, cedar, Austrian and red pine trees have been planted.



RICHARDS log cabin marker



GRATIOT COUNTY FAIR, 1912

Gratiot County Fair

The Gratiot County Agricultural Society, which for 85 years conducted the Gratiot County Fair at Ithaca, was first organized on June 13, 1866, holding the first county fair that fall in the public square in Ithaca. General Nathan Church was the first president of the association and Emery Crosby, secretary.

A temporary structure served as a floral hall for exhibits, and stock was corralled inside the rail fence which enclosed the block where the courthouse now stands. Horse races were run on a course laid out around two or three city blocks.

Tucker's history speaks of the fairgrounds in 1913 as consisting of "35 acres, with building, pens, stables, and sheds, commodious and well-located, and with ample space for all the usual attractions." Speaking of the half-mile track it says it is "one of the best in the state."

In the years immediately following 1913, Fred VanBuskirk was president; Arch McCall, secretary, and Ed Altenburg, race secretary. Under their guidance, the fair saw some of its best years. The grounds were greatly improved, barns for the display of all livestock were built, the grandstand enlarged, and the track improved.

The 1916 fair, according to reports, "scored a great success with a Thursday crowd of between 10,000 and 12,000." It was a financial success with a surplus put aside for new buildings. A new floral hall was built in 1917.

In 1920 the report said, "Gratiot Fair is getting a reputation as being one of the biggest and best county fairs in Michigan. This year was a record-breaker in receipts and attendance, agricultural displays and fine attractions. By actual count there were 1,980 cars parked on the grounds." It was estimated that more than this number were parked off the grounds and that 20,000 people attended the fair that day.

In the depression years the fair ran into difficulties making ends meet. Besides the economic conditions other factors were operating to cut the enthusiasm. One of these was the coming of the Ionia Free Fair, which was privately financed and developed into a fair that competed with the state fair in all respects. The ease of traveling to other places of entertainment, the development of movies and many other forms of keeping the public entertained, and

finally radio and television all took their toll. Despite attempts by officers, county agricultural agents, farm organizations and other interested individuals, there was a falling off of interest. Horse racing, although excellent, failed to draw a grandstand that would pay the purses. Stage shows of high calibre often failed to pay their way.

There were a few exceptions, such as the time a car was given away in front of the grandstand. This drew one of the largest crowds in the history of the fair, with the grandstand, rented bleachers, track and all space within hearing and sight of the platform crowded.

As "free fairs" seemed to be growing in popularity, the Gratiot County Agricultural Society staged its first Gratiot County Free Fair in 1942. An excellent program was provided and good crowds attended.

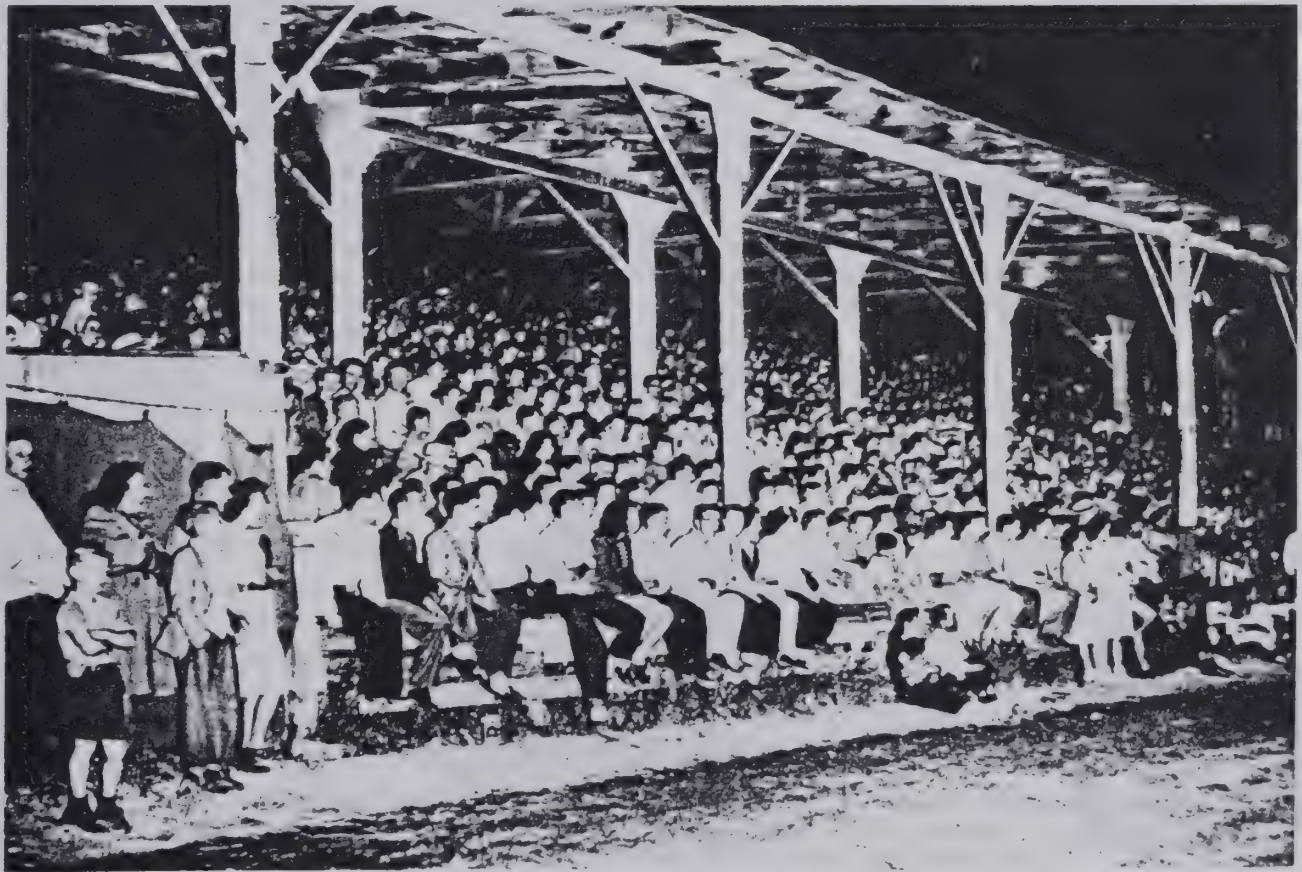
When 4-H club work in the county developed, it was but natural that the Gratiot County Fair, being centrally located, become the place for countywide competition in all fields of club activity, and for several years interest ran high with new records in the number and quality of exhibits.

George Winget, who at the time was manager of the fair for the Agricultural Society, worked out a plan with the then county agent, C. P. Milham, for the erection of a 4-H building on the fairgrounds, through a cooperative effort of the youth groups and the county.

A new spacious building was erected. Plans for financing did not work out as expected, however, and Winget, who had personally put up the money for the building, was finally paid off by funds solicited from local merchants with Rolla MacLaren and Edward Muscott as trustees. A second mortgage was given this group in the amount of \$2,450.

The first mortgage was foreclosed and the grounds purchased by Dr. F. R. McNabb on March 3, 1945, at a sheriff's sale, for \$3,273. The last Gratiot County Fair conducted by the Gratiot County Agricultural Society was held in 1949.

Thus passes into the annals of history one of the early institutions that has contributed to the lives of previous generations.



GRANDSTAND AT NIGHT, 1948



ARTHUR BLACKALLER
Rip Van Winkle



CHIC PERKINS
The Little Prospector



JESSIE BONSTELLE



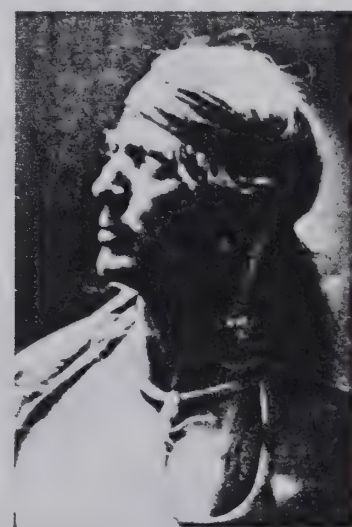
FRANCES HALL, Ithaca's Lovely
Lady and Excellent Actress



HENRY BLACKALLER



EDNA MARSHALL
The Holy City



CLARENCE BENNETT
The Royal Slave

The Theatre

"Finished. Ithaca's Elegant New Opera House finally completed. Beautiful scenery and other fixtures. The Grand Opening Next Week by a First Class Theatrical Company."

With these words Robert Smith, editor, acquainted the residents of Ithaca and vicinity, in the Gratiot County Journal, February 13, 1880, of the opening of Church's Opera House, Thursday, February 19, 1880.

The opera house was located on the second floor of the building now occupied by the McCormack Store, 142 East Center Street.

Mr. Smith continues, "The hall is elaborately frescoed, warmed by a furnace and lighted with gas." The stone weight used in the lighting plant is at present in front of the N. A. Trexler residence, 110 West Center Street, where it served as a hitching post.

Continuing the description, "The scenery is unsurpassed by any in the state. There are forests that look as if they might contain game, gardens bearing tropical fruits - streets that transport you to New York's busy Broadway. There are palaces as elaborate as those in our new state building; dungeons apparently stronger than those in our county jail, and the drop curtain an oriental scene, if you don't think it is handsome, we will be mistaken."

Opera House was under the management of Wilbur Nelson and Nathan Church.

Gratiot County Journal, February 27, 1880. "Church's handsome New Opera House successfully opened to the public, Thursday, Friday and Saturday of last week."

The company was brought by G. A. Hough, manager of the Detroit Opera House.

"First evening, TICKET OF LEAVE MAN, on the second evening there were about 500 present to witness the production of UNCLE TOM'S CABIN."

Lulu Sutherland Sawyer, then nine years old, recalled being taken by her father to see the performance of UNCLE TOM'S CABIN.

On Saturday evening the play THE DRUNKARD was given. Prices for the tickets were 50 cents; Gallery, 35 cents; Children, 25 cents.

A. O. Miller of Blissfield, Michigan, appeared in the play, A SOLDIER'S TRUST, January 1, 1881. Mr. Miller dramatized the famous poem, OVER THE HILLS TO THE POOR HOUSE, written by Michigan's poet, Will Carlton. In 1921 a motion picture was made based on the poem.

Agnes Herndon appeared at the Opera House, Wednesday, December 28, 1887, in the COMMERCIAL TOURIST'S BRIDE. The Journal writes, "Miss Herndon is a handsome woman and excellent actress." She was married to Georgie Jessel's father, but apparently was not Georgie's mother. She was also a sister of Hal Reid, real name Harry Preston, who wrote HUMAN HEARTS and many successful melodramas. Movie patrons of the early twenties will recall his son, the popular Wallace Reid.

A show came to Howell, Michigan, in the fall of 1887, starring a child actress as LITTLE TRIxie. Edward D. Stair, owner of the Howell paper and later the Detroit Free Press, recognized the ability of the little actress and became manager of the company, which was in financial trouble. He booked the play in one night stands, one of which was Ithaca, Tuesday, January 17, 1887.

The child star was Jessie Bonstelle, who later had her own stock company and theatre in Detroit. Among the future stars that came under her direction were Frank Morgan, Katherine Cornell and Ann Harding. She passed away October 14, 1932.

The play was the beginning of the theatrical career of Edward D. Stair. At one time he and John Havlin controlled 159 theatres.

The opera house was discontinued in 1901.

Ithaca's second opera house was located on the second floor of the then Charles M. Brown building, 118 East Center Street, and seated 400.

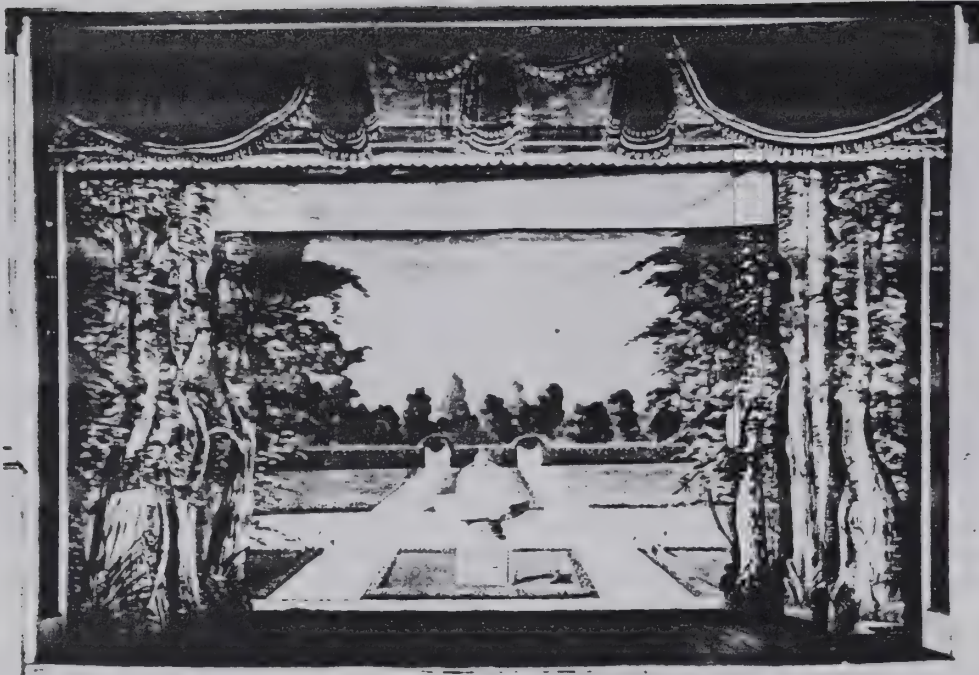
The Gratiot County Herald issue of May 14, 1904, states, "Ithaca Opera House opened grandly. Fred Raymond's Company in OLD ARKANSAW appeared in the new opera house last Saturday night, May 14, 1904." A capacity audience was very well pleased with the entertainment." The play was first performed in 1889.

Mr. Raymond also wrote the MISSOURI GIRL, which played Ithaca about 1907, and again April 11, 1912.

THE ROYAL SLAVE, September 9, 1905, and THE HOLY CITY, May 9, 1905, written by Clarence Bennett, were two of the best plays witnessed at the opera house. Mr. Bennett and his wife, Catherine Bennett, were actors of outstanding talent, and their work was that of true artists and greatly admired and applauded.

In 1908, March 2, Chic Perkins appeared in THE LITTLE PROSPECTOR.

Miss Perkins (Mrs. Frank King) was a charming and beautiful lady on and off the stage, and an actress of ex-



GARDEN SCENE -- ITHACA OPERA HOUSE

O. M. BROWN, PROPRIETOR

FRED S. BROWN, MANAGER

Newly
Equipped.

Ithaca Opera House

Electric
Lighted.

CAPACITY 550. STAGE 20X33, OPENING 18X13.

Good Attractions Well Patronized.

County Seat.
Population 2500.

ITHACA, MICH., _____ 190_____



THE HOLY CITY

- | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Roy Van Fossen | 2. Edna Marshall | 3. George V. Dill |
| 4. Catherine Bennett | 5. Henry Blackaller | |

ceptional ability. Mrs. King, now a young lady of 80 some summers, living near Chicago, retired from the theatre she loved and served so many years.

Let us pause a moment and applaud those players of another day, who through the love of their profession, carried the theatre to each city and hamlet in the nation.

Henry Blackaller was manager of the Bennett companies and married an Ithaca girl, Sadie Altenburg.

One of the best actors ever to appear on the local stage was Arthur Blackaller. Of the many characters he portrayed, his favorite and best was that of RIP VAN WINKLE.

He made RIP a lovable character, a blending of humor and pathos. The scene in which he awakens on the mountain top after his sleep of 20 years was an experience long to be remembered by those who witnessed it.

An actor recognized for his work in Shakespearean and classical drama was William Owen. He starred in the LADY OF LYONS, August 30, 1904. An accomplished Shakespearean actress was Margaret Ralph in the TAMING OF THE SHREW, May 4, 1905.

Strange as it may seem, Henrik Isben's play, THE DOLL'S HOUSE, was given September 8, 1904, featuring Clara Thropp. Herald writes, "Everyone was delighted."

The favorite UNCLE JOSH SPRUCEBY was booked a second time on May 4, 1911, with H. N. Roberts.

In the play was the famous scene where the villain ties the heroine to the saw log and starts the saw.

Other best plays were Porter J. White and Olga Verne in FAUST, October 25, 1904.

THE SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS was given October 2, 1912. Four companies of this play were on the road in 1912. With the company were Mr. and Mrs. Louis Ramsdell, Montgomery Holland and Thomas Fitzgerald.

Two very good young actors, Ralph Burt and Rollie Williams, from Pompeii, Michigan, were with the professional company of WHERE THE TRAIL DIVIDES, September 13, 1913.

Edna Marshall in THE PRICE, May 24, 1913, was one of the best performances given in Ithaca. Miss Marshall (Mrs. George V. Dill) was an excellent actress and the role of Ethel Toscani was exceptionally suited to her talents.

The play THE DEVIL by the renowned Hungarian dramatist, Ferenc Molnar, was given in Ithaca, August 18, 1905, featuring E. Sutherland Ross. It is interesting to note that the play was being done in New York at the same time and with George Arliss as the star.

The UNCLE TOM'S CABIN companies carried a band, as did some other shows. They gave a parade at noon and a "concert" before the theatre in the evening.

Some of the young boys of the village were pressed into service carrying banners in the parade advertising the play. For their services they were given complimentary tickets, or "comps." The apparently discarded band coats and caps furnished them were invariably too large, and the sleeves so long they had to be rolled up.

The manager of the company rode at the head of the parade in a fancy open buggy, drawn by a spirited horse, doffing and waving his light-colored high silk hat as he passed.

Little Eva seated in her small cart, drawn by two Shetland ponies, smilingly waved and threw kisses to the villagers who lined the sidewalks.

Two colored boys of the show led the Great Dane dogs in the parade. These dogs were always used instead of the real Blood Hounds, as they appeared much more fierce, as they chased Eliza across the canvas ice in the play. No other play ever had the universal appeal of UNCLE TOM'S CABIN.

Down through the years there were repeated performances of old favorites, LENNA RIVERS, EAST LYNNE, TEN NIGHTS IN A BAR ROOM, THELMA, TEMPEST AND SUNSHINE, ST. ELMO, JANE EYRE, CAMILLE and others.

Several additional plays of merit were: THE SQUAW MAN, a Clarence Bennett production, THE ROSARY, BEVERLY OF GRAUSTARK, BREWSTER'S MILLIONS, and THE MAN ON THE BOX.

The theatrical paper, NEW YORK CLIPPER, of October 12, 1912, lists 280 traveling road companies, 93 stock and repertoire and over 900 vaudeville acts and burlesque companies. Many additional small companies did not send their routes.

About 1912 and 1913 began the steady decline of the traveling companies, or Road Shows.

The gaining popularity of the motion pictures, together with the increased costs of production, travel and lower admission charges for the pictures was a combination with which the managers could not cope.

Sometimes the question is asked, "Will the Theatre Ever Return?"

It does not seem so, as the conditions that made it popular and a force in the lives of another generation are no longer present.

Thus, a Theatre that had been 2,000 years in the making, disappeared almost over night.

The Henderson Stock Company was the last professional company in the Ithaca Opera House on Saturday, September 30, 1933.

SPORTS



THE ITHACA HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM 1895. Back row, left to right: Ora Jerrels, coach, Charles Long, Robert Parrish, George Wells, Unknown, . . . Whitcomb. Middle row: Roscoe Barker, Herbert King, Frank Shroyer, captain; Stewart Crandell, Frank Cowdrey. Front row: Unknown, Herbert Ringle, Wm. E. Barstow, Ed Brown.



ITHACA VILLAGE BASEBALL TEAM 1888 or 1889. Top row, left to right: Turner, Smith, John Jeffery, Jr., Salisbury, Pettit. Middle row: Unknown, Harris, Sweet, Russell. Front row: Waterbury, Arch McCall, Craig.



HILLSOTA - National season champion 2-year-old pacer 1952. Time 2:00 $\frac{3}{5}$. Three-year-old record 2:00. World record for 1-1/2 miles 1954 - time 3:03 $\frac{3}{5}$.



JOE GAGE, boxer, fireman, barber, gentleman.



RUNNER-UP at regional tournaments, 1946. Back row: J. Gabrion, M. Parling, J. Greer, Coach H. Becker, R. Andrews, J. Alverson, E. Fairchilds, manager. Front row: W. Budge, L. Street, R. Flegel, V. Stapleton, M. Zimmerman.



DISTRICT WINNERS, 1943. (No regional or state tournaments during the war.) Back row: Coach S. Keglovitz, F. Wheeler, E. Iles, D. Beard, R. Patterson, M. Evitts, J. Wilson, manager. Front row: J. Ginther, J. Hodges, K. Probst, R. Crozier, H. Whitaker.



ITHACA HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL TEAM - 1955. First Championship team in the Mid-Michigan B Conference. Front row, kneeling, left to right: K. Cook, M. Hoard, V. Kench, E. Becker, C. Davis, J. Raducha, H. Crawford, and Manager B. Askie. Standing, left to right: H. Smith, D. Stevens, J. Kench, J. Strong, J. Kirkey, R. Howes, C. Corder, T. Hegle, W. Donahoe, R. Strong, J. Evitts and Coach W. Kirby.

POST OFFICE



ITHACA'S FIRST RURAL MAIL CARRIERS 1902. Left to right - James Teed, R. 1; Orin H. Kinsel, R. 2; Alfred Saleno, R. 3; Andrew Gibbs, R. 4; George Daniels, R. 5. Teed was the first to use an automobile for delivering mail from the Ithaca office, 1909.

The first postoffice of Gratiot Center, Gratiot county, Michigan, was authorized by the Federal Government in 1855. John Jeffery had purchased a tract of land at the geographical center of Gratiot county and had had a survey made of a prospective village, which by common consent was called Gratiot Center.

The building used as the first postoffice was located at the southwest corner of Center and Elm Streets, now occupied by the Tom Harrod residence.

The first postmaster was John Knight, who was appointed on November 16, 1855. Following him was Orville M. Wood on January 13, 1857; Franklin Miller, March 12, 1857.

In April 1857 Gratiot Center became Ithaca, named for Ithaca, New York, where John Jeffery originally lived.

Franklin Miller continued in office until Samuel L. Miller's appointment on October 19, 1858. Then came John Knight, December 28, 1858; John Jeffery, April 13, 1859; William Comstock, September 29, 1862; Benjamin F. Shepherd, October 13, 1866; Nathan Church, March 9, 1868; Alfred A. Wood, August 6, 1874; Robert Smith, December 8, 1880; Daniel C. Johnson, October 28, 1886; Alvin D. Pettit, January 27, 1891; Dixi G. Hall, January 28, 1895; William A. Leet, October 1, 1897. Mr. Leet's appointment was not confirmed so Herbert J. Crawford, who, as one of Dixi Hall's bondsmen, was acting postmaster and in possession of the office, continued in that capacity until July 11, 1898. Then W. A. Leet was again appointed and later confirmed on March 3, 1899. He was followed by J. N. McCall, whose appointment was dated February 11, 1903, and who continued in office until February 1916, having served 13 years.

Charles M. Brown succeeded Mr. McCall but because of illness, his four-year term was completed by George O. Davis, who was his bondsman. On February 20, Floyd Gibbs started his 15-1/2-year term, finishing in 1935.

James O. Peet was appointed in 1935 and confirmed April 21, 1936. He served until February 1949, when he retired because of illness. Howard Alverson, appointed in February 1949 and confirmed September 20, 1950, is the present postmaster.

Other sites of the postoffice were at 110 North Pine River, about where Lola's Beauty Shop is located now; on West Center, at the approximate location of Hanner's Magazine Store now; at 153 East Center, occupied now by Johnson's Color and Harmony Store, and at the southeast corner of Center and Pine River, where it is now located. Possibly there were other locations but there are no records available.



PRESENT
ITHACA POSTOFFICE

When Ithaca, Alma and St. Louis offices had been established, a mail route from St. Johns, by way of Maple Rapids, carried the mail each way once a week, if roads did not get too bad and everyone kept sober; otherwise it came less frequently. For many years mail was carried by trains but since they have been discontinued, it is transported by mail truck. At present Ithaca's mail arrives from Lansing at 8 a. m. ; the truck continues on to Clare, returning at 2 p. m. , collecting mail enroute.

In 1920, during Mr. Leet's term, Rural Free Delivery was established. At that time there were five routes, each serving about 25 miles. The original carriers were James Teed, R. R. 1; Orin Kinsel, R. R. 2; Alfred Saleno, R. R. 3; Andrew Gibbs, R. R. 4; George H. Daniels, R. R. 5. Using Ithaca as a distributing point, there were nine routes at one time.

At the present time Ithaca has four routes. R. R. 1 is carried by Georgiana Peet Miller; R. R. 2, Ray T. Willert; R. R. 3, Kenneth D. Peters; R. R. 4, Harold F. Emery.

In January 1949, during Mr. Peet's term of office, two city delivery routes were established. The first city carriers were Lloyd Maxwell and Robert B. Evans.

Originally there were two residential deliveries each day but as an economy measure, this was reduced to one delivery. Carrier Howard Fortney walks about ten miles each day and also delivers by truck all of the parcel post to residential and business places. Parcel post was established on January 1, 1913. Carrier Evans walks about 15 miles each day, serving about 300 families and the business section.

The first air letter that came into Ithaca was in 1924. It was sent to Charles M. Brown. Postage on the letter was 24 cents, the rate per half ounce then, as compared to the present rate of six cents per ounce.

At present the office has three regular and two temporary clerks.

Upon completion of a new building now being erected by Clarence Muscott at 125 South Pine River Street, the Ithaca postoffice will move to this new location.



FIRST CITY CARRIERS -
Robert Evans, Lloyd Maxwell

Newspapers



W. D. TUCKER'S GRATIOT COUNTY HERALD



THE GRATIOT JOURNAL

Although the Gratiot County Herald has been published by the McCalls for 63 years, it is the direct lineal descendant of the first newspaper published in the county - The Gratiot County News, founded 97 years ago, in 1858, at Ithaca.

Samuel N. Miller and Robert Sutton were the founders of the News, the equipment being brought to Ithaca from Owosso. The first edition was dated May 1, 1858. It was first housed in the log portion of the Ithaca Hotel which was erected by William W. Comstock in 1856 at the northeast corner of Main and Center Streets, where the Standard Oil station now stands.

Six months later, in the fall of 1858, William Comstock took over the News and leased it to Jesse P. Wheaton, who employed Moses Tompkins as editor. About this time it was moved to a building of its own where the Trexler residence, at 206 West Center Street, now stands.

The paper next went into the hands of D. P. Cornell, who sold it to Nathan Church and Daniel Taylor. They immediately purchased new material, modernized the paper and changed its name to the Gratiot County Journal. Church soon sold his interest to Taylor, who hired Theron A. Johnson as editor.

From 1872, Robert Smith, one of the most colorful and able, as well as one of the most caustic of the early editors, conducted the paper for 18 years, selling it to Charles H. and Adébert E. Chase, brothers, who operated it until 1893. In that year a newspaper syndicate was formed in the county, consisting of the Journal, Alma Record and St. Louis Republican Leader. After three years the syndicate dissolved and the Chase brothers resumed control of the Journal, continuing until May 1902, when they sold to Fred Griswold, now of Lansing.

A stock company took over the paper in 1906, and Griswold continued as manager. In 1912 the paper was sold to E. C. Bridgman on contract, but was taken back by the company the following year and sold outright to Myles F. Gray of Lansing. In 1914 Gray decided to return to Lansing, where for many years he served as clerk of the House of Representatives, and the name, subscription list and files were taken over by the Gratiot County Herald.

Other Ithaca Papers

In 1860, Israel B. Coats, an Ithaca attorney, started a newspaper called the Northern Courier. He died shortly after, and the paper ceased publication.

In 1878, Charles S. Hilbourn established the Gratiot County Democrat at Ithaca. It continued for three years, the equipment then being moved to Muskegon, where Hilbourn conducted a job shop for many years.

In 1883 the Ithaca Times was started by Frank M. Vandercook, who had previously owned the St. Louis Leader. After about a year Vandercook sold the paper to W. L. Hilbourn and R. G. Harpham, but took it back after a few months, moved the equipment to St. Louis and established the St. Louis Republican.

In 1886, a combination known as Johnson and Groom founded a paper in Ithaca and called it the Gratiot Advance. In December 1887, W. D. Tucker, who had purchased the St. Louis Herald in 1881, purchased the Gratiot Advance, combined it with the St. Louis Herald and renamed it the Gratiot County Herald, publishing it at Ithaca.

On July 23, 1892, Tucker sold the Herald to J. N. McCall. His brother, E. J. McCall, came to Ithaca in 1905 and was with him until 1913, when he went to Mt. Pleasant to take over a paper the brothers had purchased there, and W. Webb McCall, eldest son of J. N. McCall, became associated with his father at Ithaca.

In 1920, Webb McCall went to Mt. Pleasant to act as business manager of the paper there, and another son, Romaine McCall, became associated with his father in the Gratiot County Herald. Four years later a third son, George K. McCall, came into the Herald partnership.

Upon the death of John N. McCall on November 1, 1927, Romaine McCall and George K. McCall took over the management and editorship of the Herald and have continued as partners in the paper up to the present time.

J. N. McCall was one of the first two Michigan publishers to be named to the Michigan Newspaper Hall of Fame in 1953, the year it was established.

Tucker's history of Gratiot county records the first newspaper building in Ithaca on the northwest corner of Center and Maple Streets in 1858. No continuous record is made, however, of the location of the various Ithaca newspapers. Chapman Brothers history speaks of the Ithaca Times being located at the corner of Center and Main Streets in 1884.

In 1874 the Journal was located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Center and Jefferson Streets. A fire that year destroyed the Beckwith and Mean planing mill which stood on the southeast corner of the same intersection, severely damaging the Journal office. Another fire, September 20, 1879, destroyed the Journal plant.

About this time in 1879, William C. Beckwith was completing the brick building on the site of his old planing mill. It was a two-story building, the top floor to be used as a Masonic lodge and the ground floor as a furniture store. It is doubtful if the first floor was ever used for that purpose, because the Journal was moved into the building and remained there until it passed out of existence in 1914.

It is also known that the Gratiot County Herald was located at the southeast corner of the intersection of North Main and East Emerson Streets, in a building probably built for that purpose when W. D. Tucker established the Gratiot County Herald in 1887. It was later moved over the postoffice, at 153-1/2 East Center Street in the Barstow block, where it was located when purchased by J. N. McCall in 1892.

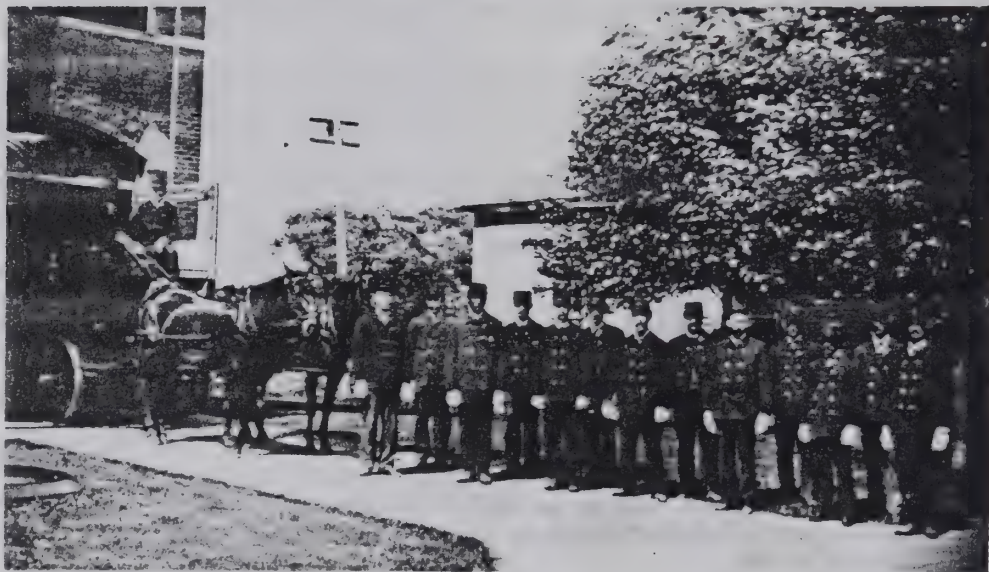
In 1904, J. N. McCall erected a 33 x 80 two-story cement block building at 121 North Main Street, housing both the Herald on the first floor and the Dr. Scott cigar factory on the second floor. In the early hours of the morning of December 26, 1926, a fire gutted the front portion of the building. In rebuilding, the top story was torn off and the building extended 40 feet to the west. In 1949 an addition 18 x 105 feet was completed on the north side.

McCALL'S GRATIOT COUNTY HERALD, built in 1905 with second story used as cigar factory.



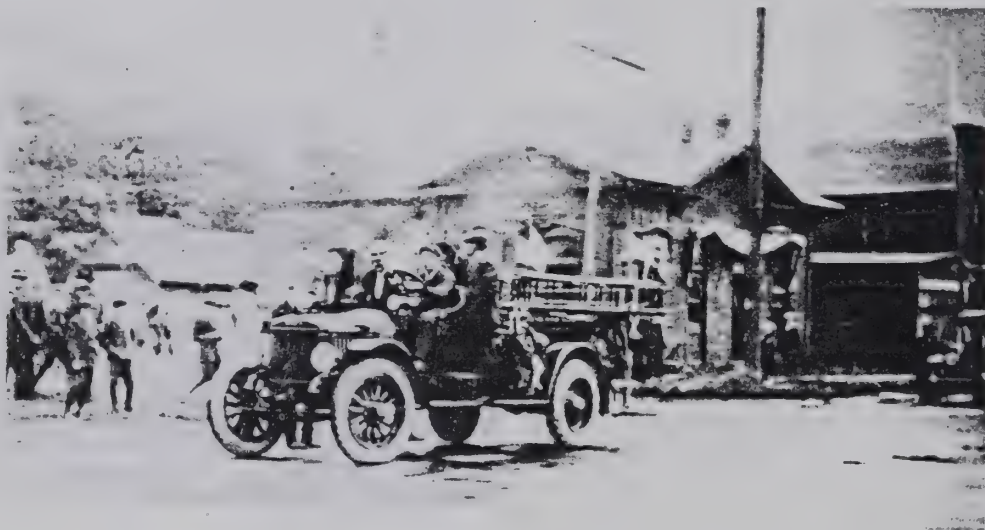
FIRE DEPARTMENT

ITHACA FIRE DEPARTMENT
1896 - Left to Right: Will Peck,
Driver; A. P. Lane; J. L.
Barden; Elmer Hiffner; Joe
Gage; Hart Baker; Jesse Fuller;
John Sprague; Thomas Beek;
Adelbert E. Barstow; O. F.
Jackson; Tony Mull; John Ker-
nen; George Gorsuch; Seth Ward.



CHAMPION ITHACA HOSE COMPANY NO. 1. Winner in wet race at North Michigan Firemen's
Tournament held in Alma, August 25, 1887. Time 38-1/4 seconds.

ITHACA'S FIRST FIRE TRUCK, a 1917
Republic. Orville Allen, Driver; and
Ralph Pettit.





GRATIOT COUNTY ROAD COMMISSION GARAGE - January 13, 1946.



PUTNAM COMPANY HARDWARE, George Cashmore Poultry and Ted Rayburn Furniture, April 21, 1936.



WEATHER VANE purchased by fire department for \$12.32 in 1895, located atop the village hall.

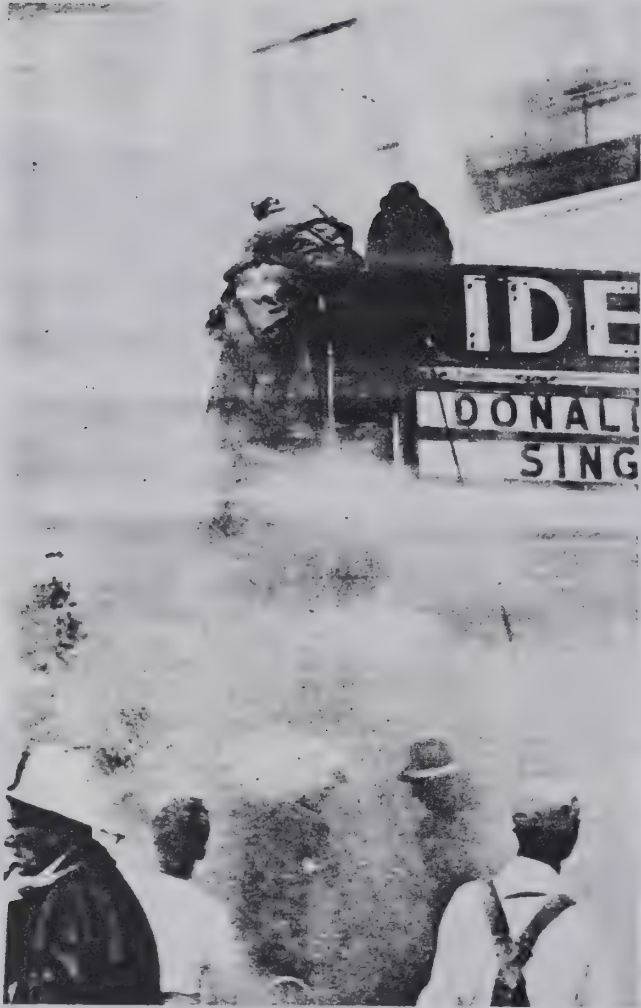


GRATIOT COUNTY INFIRMARY BARN, August 15, 1951.



GRATIOT COUNTY HERALD OFFICE. December 26, 1926.

ITHACA FIRE DEPARTMENT



IDEAL THEATRE- June 25, 1952



C. BARDEN, DR. W. J. LAIRD AND L. CHALK-ER using resuscitator on fireman shown being rescued in upper picture.

Organized fire protection in Ithaca started in 1873 when a well was sunk on the northwest corner of Center and South Main Streets. Later another well was located and a wind-mill erected west of the entrance to the present village hall, on the northeast corner of Center and Maple Streets, to supply reservoirs which were dug at the various street intersections.

In 1878 a hook and ladder company was formed and a force pump purchased for \$1200. The equipment included 700 feet of 3-inch hose and four Babcock extinguishers. The pump was mounted on four wheels and it threw 18 barrels of water per minute. It had several long sweeps and could be operated by horse- or man-power. The pump was small but its job big during Ithaca's disastrous fire of July 10, 1890.

The fire house at that time was located on the west side of South Main Street, a short distance north of where Dick's Studio now stands.

In 1895 the equipment was moved to the present location, and horse-drawn fire equipment made its debut along with a new water system. Hydrants were now installed on the street corners with water being supplied from the stand-pipe. In case of fire the pressure to the hydrants was increased by large pumps located in the village hall. This system was still in effect when the horses made their last fire run on July 2, 1917.

The first fire truck was a 1917 Republic, which made its first fire run September 29, 1917. In 1925 a Reo fire truck was purchased. This new truck had four Boyer chemical tanks and was the first to answer rural alarms.

By 1929 the system of pressurized mains was beginning to be troublesome, and the village purchased its first pump-er, an American LaFrance. In 1935 a front-end pump was added to the Reo.

The two trucks answered all requirements until 1939 when a GMC combination rural and city truck replaced the Reo. The year 1952 saw the purchase of an auxiliary water truck for rural runs, a much-needed item for a department which has protection contracts with 10 townships.

In 1953 a Seagrave pumper replaced the old American LaFrance and in 1954 a new GMC combination high and low pressure truck was purchased through the joint efforts of the village and surrounding townships. This modern piece of equipment also has a two-way radio using the same frequency as the sheriff's department.

An annual firemen's ball was inaugurated in 1948 for the purpose of raising money to be used for extra fire equipment. The first purchase was a resuscitator and inhalator, and many first-aid calls have been answered with this unit.

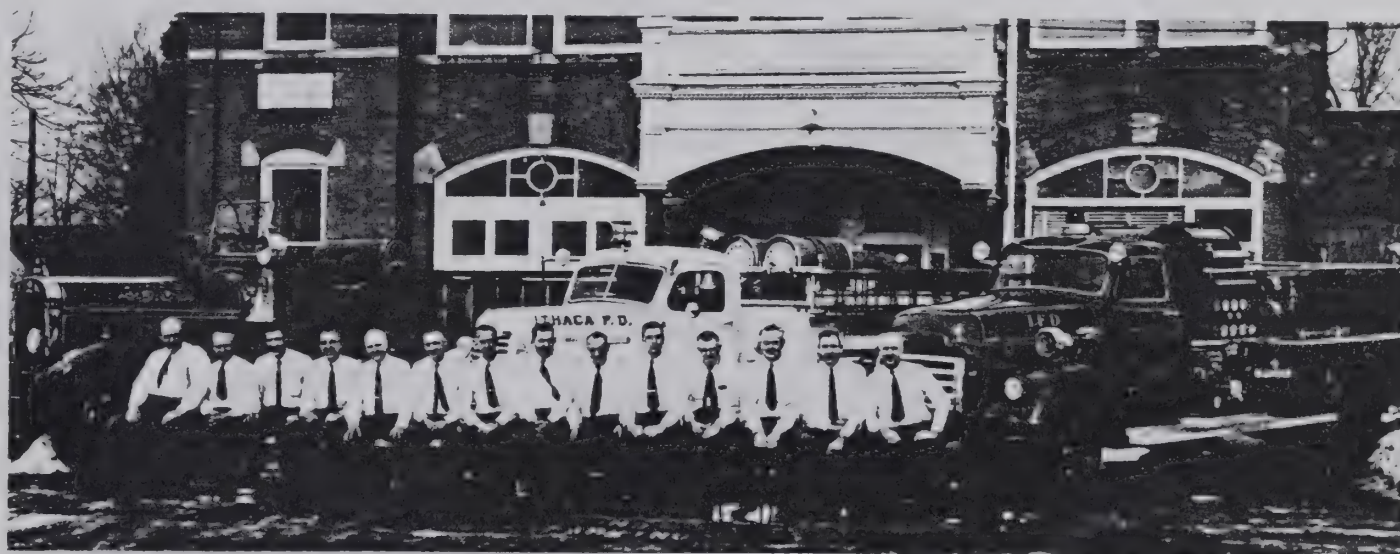
Membership in the department has varied in numbers from a record high of 75 in 1889 to 17 at the present time. In 1891 with 67 members, only seven fire calls were answered.



ITHACA ELEVATOR - February 6, 1954

The members have chosen the following men through the years to direct Ithaca's fire fighting programs as chief of the department: 1880, John W. Lewis; 1887, Oscar F. Jackson; 1892, A. P. Lane; 1901, F. H. McKay; 1903, John Kern; 1911, Ralph Pettit; 1919, Hart Baker; 1922, Horace Coleman; 1928, Miles Nelson; 1942, Robert Russell; 1946, Fred Gay; 1954, Roy Greer.

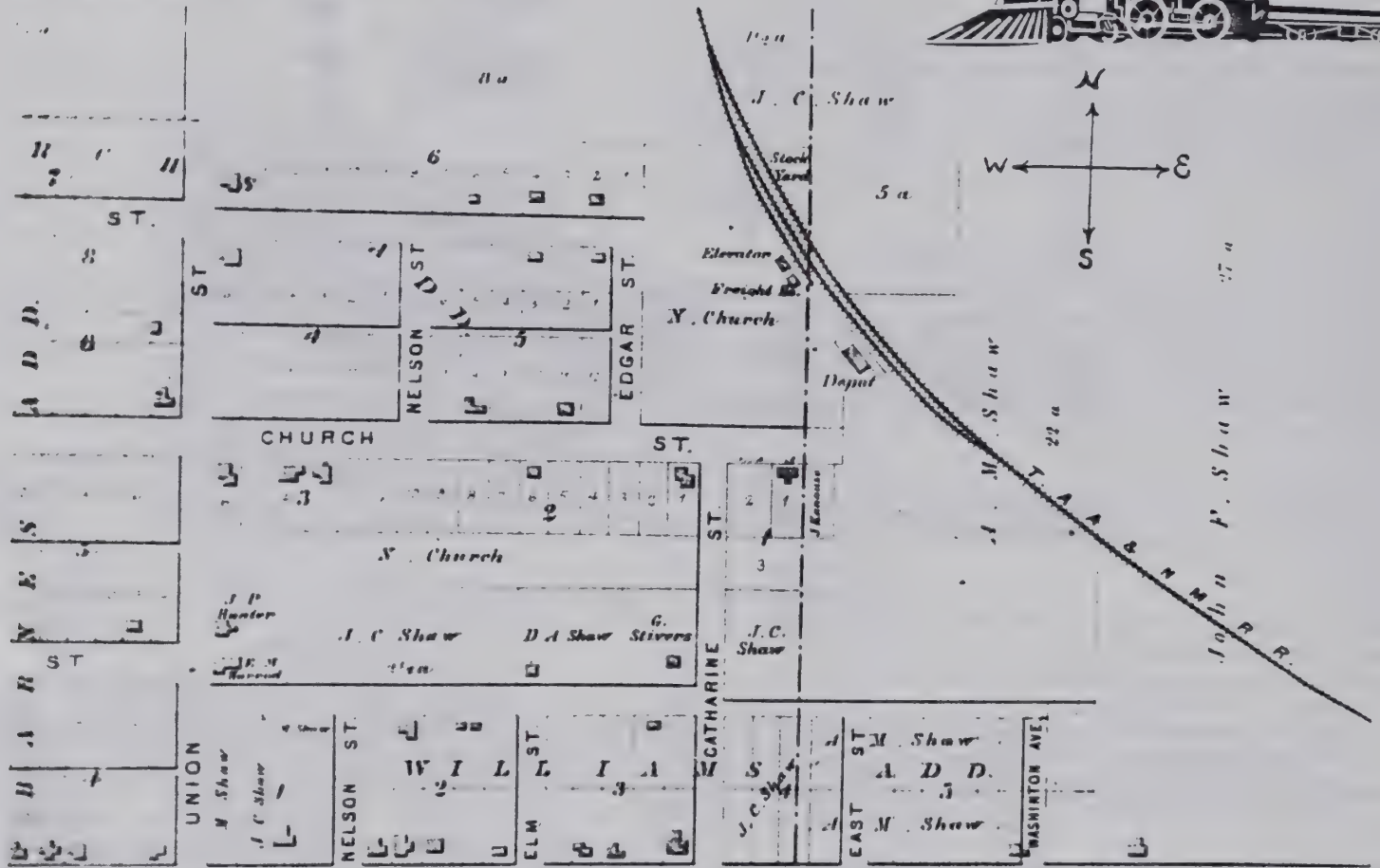
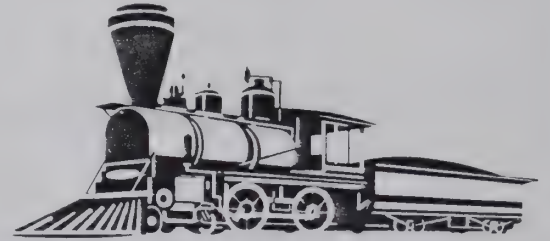
The local department has always been active in the Michigan State Firemen's association, being host to the state convention in 1896 and co-host with Alma and St. Louis in 1954. O. F. Jackson was president of the association in 1890. Later Jackson and A. P. Lane served several terms each as secretary and treasurer. Linn Chalker was elected second vice-president of the state association in 1954.



ITHACA FIRE DEPARTMENT - 1955

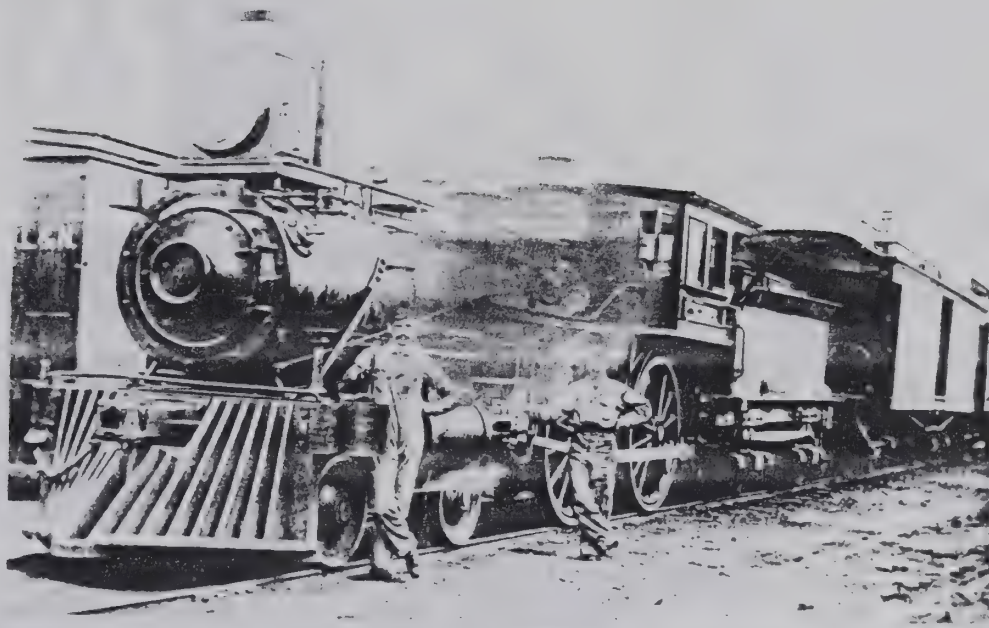
Left to Right: Chief Roy Greer, Harold Emery, Duane Beard, Charles Larry, Howard Alverson, Fred Howes, Norman Trexler (village council fire committeeman), H. R. Clagg, Dale Churchill, Carl Lenhard, Fred Gay, Gerald Pease, Roland Reeves, and Robert Reidel. Added to department since picture was taken: J. L. Kern, Darwin Beard, Robert Putnam, E. R. Williams.

Railroads



ITHACA'S RAILROAD SYSTEM 1889.





RAILROAD ENGINE 1895. Left to right - William Hill, engineer, William Ketcheson, fireman. This engine ran from Ithaca to Alma over the stub road which opened in 1882 and was connected with the main line of the Ann Arbor railroad in 1897.



MOTOR CAR OPERATED ON ANN ARBOR RAILROAD during the early 1920's. They made two trips each way every day. The motor car was sometimes called the "Potato bug."



ANN ARBOR DEPOT



LAST PASSENGER TRAIN THROUGH ITHACA - 1951. Mail and express are now trucked to and from Ithaca, with passengers carried on modern bus lines. Left to right: H. V. Stevens (man walking toward camera), Carl Siebert and Harold Emery. Man in car unknown.



DIESEL ENGINE

ELEVATORS



ITHACA MILLING COMPANY was built in 1883 by J. H. Seaver and burned in 1899. It was rebuilt in 1900 on the same location and renamed Ithaca Roller Mills under the management of James B. Crawford.



NELSON & BARBER, operated by Wilbur Nelson and A. S. Barber. Located at 235 South Pine River Street. Destroyed by fire March 27, 1892.



ITHACA ELEVATOR COMPANY organized in 1907 as Independent Elevator Company. Changed to The Gleaner-Farmers Elevator Company in 1912. Picture taken after snow storm May 9, 1923.



NELSON GRAIN COMPANY organized by Wilbur Nelson in 1893 and upon his death in 1915, was sold to the Ithaca Roller Mills.



ITHACA NATIONAL BANK

Banks

Organized banking in Ithaca, as in most communities, began with the establishment of a private bank by a few private citizens of means who saw the need of such an institution in the growing community.

In 1877, Nathan Church, Mrs. Mary H. Church of Ithaca, and Perley Bills of Tecumseh, Michigan, organized Ithaca's first bank, known as Church, Bills & Co. It opened for business on the southwest corner of Main and Center Streets where the Gratiot County Abstract is now located.

The bank was housed in a new building which later served twice as a postoffice, as a laundry, and finally as the Peninsular Dusting Co. store at the corner of South Pine River and Newark Streets.

After three years in its original location, the bank was moved in August 1880 to 213 East Center Street, to make room for the erection of the Jeffery block, now the Masonic Temple building. That same year the bank was reorganized and a new brick building for it begun by General Church. In March 1881, the bank was moved into its new quarters, now the Commercial National Bank of Ithaca at 144 East Center Street. This bank ceased operation on November 29, 1892, all deposits being paid in full.

Another private bank was organized in Ithaca in May 1880 under the name of Steel, Turck & Co. It commenced business on the north side of Center Street, in the Beasley block, now the Rhynard Firestone Store, at 159 East Center Street. On February 21, 1881, the bank moved into the new Jeffery block at the southwest corner of Main and Center Streets.

On July 7, 1884, Steel, Turck & Co. was reorganized as a national bank and became the First National Bank of Ithaca. In 1896 the bank met reverses and on October 6, 1896, ceased operation. All depositors were paid in full.

ITHACA BANKING COMPANY - In October 1897, three men from Pontiac, looking over the Ithaca banking situation, believed another bank here would succeed. They, with Edwin H. Ashley of Ithaca, founded the Ithaca Banking Co. and opened for business as a private bank on January 17, 1898, and continued in the Jeffery block until the fall of 1902, when it was taken over by the newly-organized Ithaca National Bank.

ITHACA NATIONAL BANK - The Jeffery block at the corner of Center and Main Streets continued as the "bank corner" when the Ithaca National Bank was organized in October 1902, with \$25,000 capital and many influential local businessmen as stockholders and directors. In 1909 the bank purchased the Steel-Webster building on the southeast corner of the intersection of Pine River and Center Streets, where the postoffice is now located, and moved into the new location.

It continued in business in this location until the depression of the early thirties, when it met reverses. It closed on November 11, 1931, thereafter being liquidated, depositors receiving more than 90 percent of their funds.

The closing of the Ithaca National Bank preceded by a little more than a year the Michigan Bank Holiday, declared by Governor William A. Comstock, which closed all banks in the state for eight days, from February 14, 1933, to February 22, 1933. This was followed on March 6, 1933, by the closing of all banks and trust companies in the country by proclamation of President Franklin D. Roosevelt for a period of three days.

PEOPLES STATE BANK OF ITHACA - As an adjunct of the Ithaca National Bank, and with practically the same stockholders, board of directors and officers, the Peoples State Bank of Ithaca was organized in April 1911, doing business in the same building as the parent organization. After a short time it was absorbed by the Ithaca National Bank.

ITHACA SAVINGS BANK - Within 30 days after the failure of the Church, Bills & Co. bank in November 1892, a group of local citizens organized the Ithaca Savings Bank, which opened for business January 18, 1893, in the bank building vacated by the defunct bank. This bank continued in business at this same location until it was combined with the Commercial National Bank of Ithaca on December 31, 1937.

COMMERCIAL NATIONAL BANK - In October 1902, a new bank was organized in Ithaca under the name of the Commercial State Bank of Ithaca, and opened for business in the Monfort block at 147 East Center Street, where Barrone's Market is now located. The stockholders and directors were largely the same as those of the Ithaca Savings Bank, and in April 1910 the business was transferred to the same building as the latter. The Commercial State Bank was converted into a national bank and became the Commercial National Bank of Ithaca with a capital of \$35,000.

The two banks remained in the same building with many of the same stockholders, directors and officers, each bank stressing that part of the banking business indicated by the name "Savings" and "Commercial." On December 31, 1937, the two banks consolidated under the name of the Commercial National Bank of Ithaca. Assets of the bank after consolidation totalled \$1,383,089.39 with deposits of \$1,251,989.94.

The growth and prosperity of the community as well as the bank since that date is reflected in their statement of April 11, 1955, which shows deposits of \$5,597,265 and total assets of \$6,117,549. Present officers of the bank are Norton E. Gibbs, chairman of the board; Lynn T. Miller, president; Hampton J. Stroupe, executive vice president; Wilbur D. Collison, cashier; Leonora Hatzenbuehler, Melvin R. Stacy and Elsie Ringle, assistant cashiers.

Lumbering



LOGS for Naldrett Mill, 1900. Drivers, left to right: Chet Walters, Dan Davis, Claude Knapp, Hugh Davis.

The stave and heading manufacturing business was inaugurated in the spring of 1883, when Josiah C. Richards & Co. built a factory building in the southwest part of town. The enterprise proved of great importance to Ithaca.

Early in 1884, Clarence W. Althouse of Flint took a controlling interest in the factory, the name being then changed to Richards, Althouse & Co. After about two years, C. W. Althouse became sole owner. The plant was destroyed by fire March 11, 1894, but was rebuilt the same year, Ithaca citizens subscribing a bonus of \$2,000. In December, 1903, the plant was bought by Armour & Co. for manufacture of receptacles for a great variety of products.

Armour & Co. remained in business here until the fall of 1910, when the plant was moved to Hill City, Minnesota.

One of the first sawmills in Ithaca was erected by John Jeffery, Francis Nelson and Lafayette Church on the northeast corner of Main and Emerson Streets, and continued in operation until 1890 when James Moore bought the property, tore down the mill and erected several frame dwellings. Among the successive owners were Columbus Levering; W. W. Comstock; Rice, Sutliff & Perry; Rice, Sutliff and Randall; J. W. Everett; Henry Kinkerter.

In 1882 William F. Thompson bought the property on the southeast corner of Main and Emerson, where the Clarence Goodrich home now stands, and transformed a flouring mill into a sawmill and butter tub factory. It was bought by Armour & Co. in 1903 and consolidated with the stave mill and tub factory in the southwest part of town.

Other lumbering operations were the steam sawmill of Rice & Sutliff, located in the second block of North Jefferson on the east side; a foundry and machine shop on the north side of East Emerson, just west of Main Street where the Dionise and Alger residences are now located; a furniture manufacturing plant and planing mill on the south side of North Street, taking up most of the space now occupied by the residences of Charles Bloss, Frank Tracy, Mrs. William Purdy and Jack McClow.



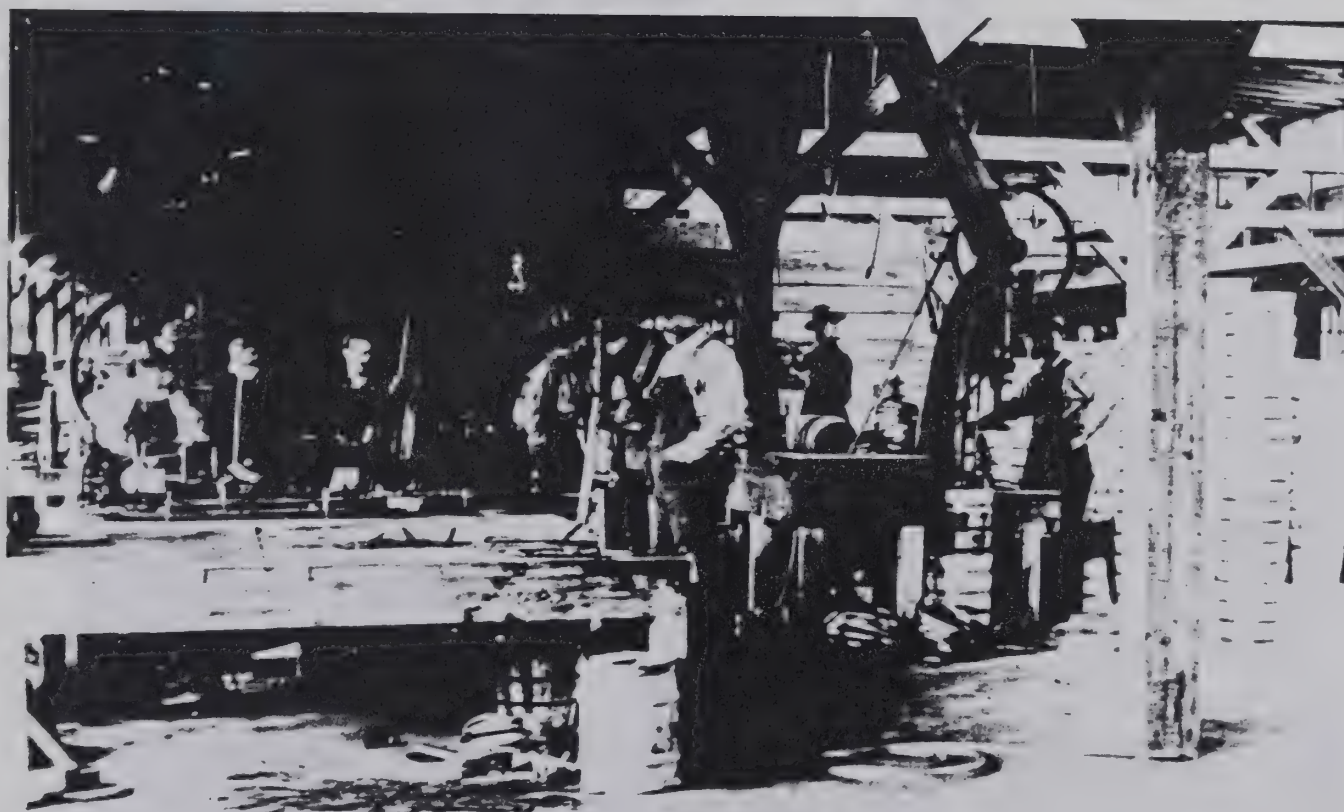
NALDRETT MILL



LUMBER STOCK PILE - NALDRETT MILL



BOLTS FOR ALTHOUSE MILL



ALTHOUSE MILL INTERIOR



BECKWITH & MEAD FURNITURE FACTORY and planing mill located on the southeast corner of Center and Jefferson Streets.
Destroyed by fire June 6, 1874.



WRECKAGE after Thompson Mill explosion, 1887. Three men were killed.



THOMPSON MILL CREW



Superior Drying Facilities.

DRY KILNS
32X120 FEET.

Huyett & Smith
Heating Apparatus.

Stave and Heading Factory

C. W. Althouse

ITHACA, MICHIGAN.

[Built in 1894.]

ALTHOUSE MILL



(1) Wells foundry. (2) Thompson mill after rebuilding.



(1) Rogers furniture factory. (2) Stock pile for Thompson mill.
(3) Old I. O. O. F. Hall. (4) Nooney Studio.

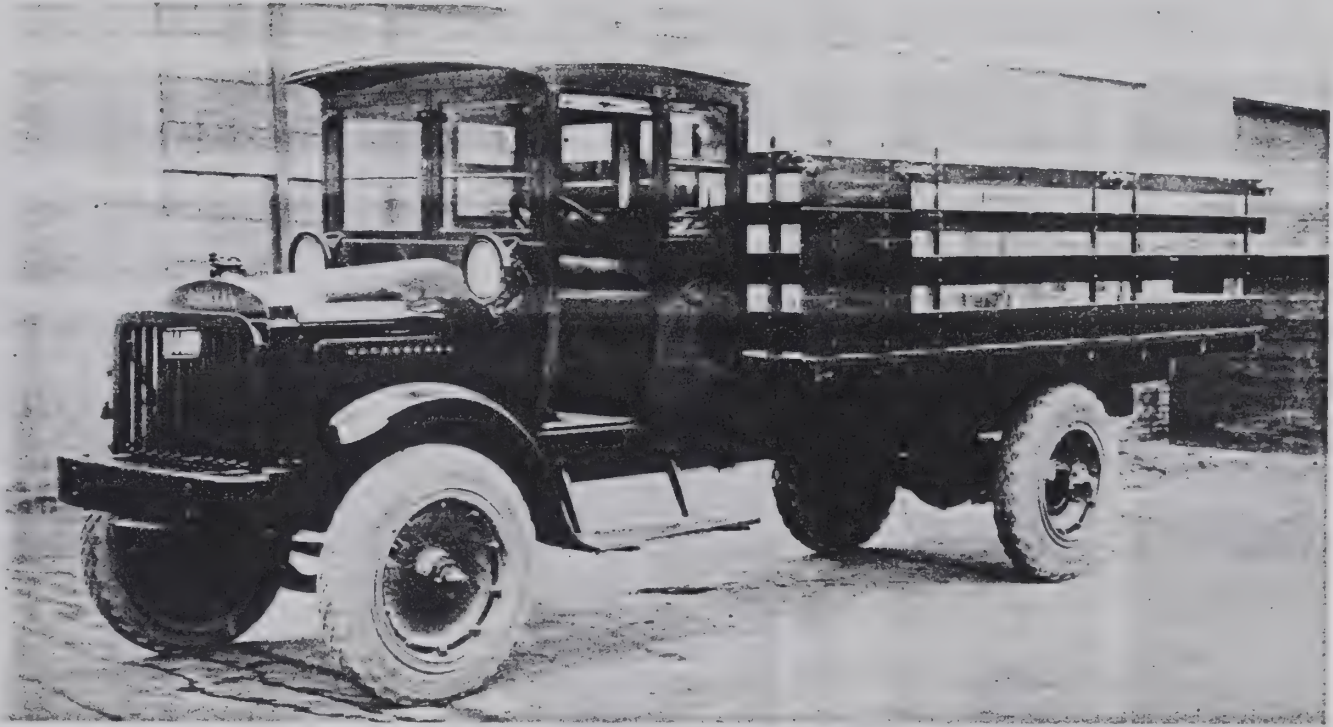


TILE YARD located at 502 West St. Charles Road. Established by D. C. Gibbs in 1891 and sold to E. W. Redman in 1907. Later J. O. Thomas purchased a share of the business and in 1912 he bought out Redman. Mr. Thomas dismantled the tile yard and used the pit for production of ice for sale in Ithaca.



HAVANA CIGAR FACTORY - Left to right: Alfred McBrian, Scott Knapp, Retta Coleman, Unknown, Ed Cumming.

Industry



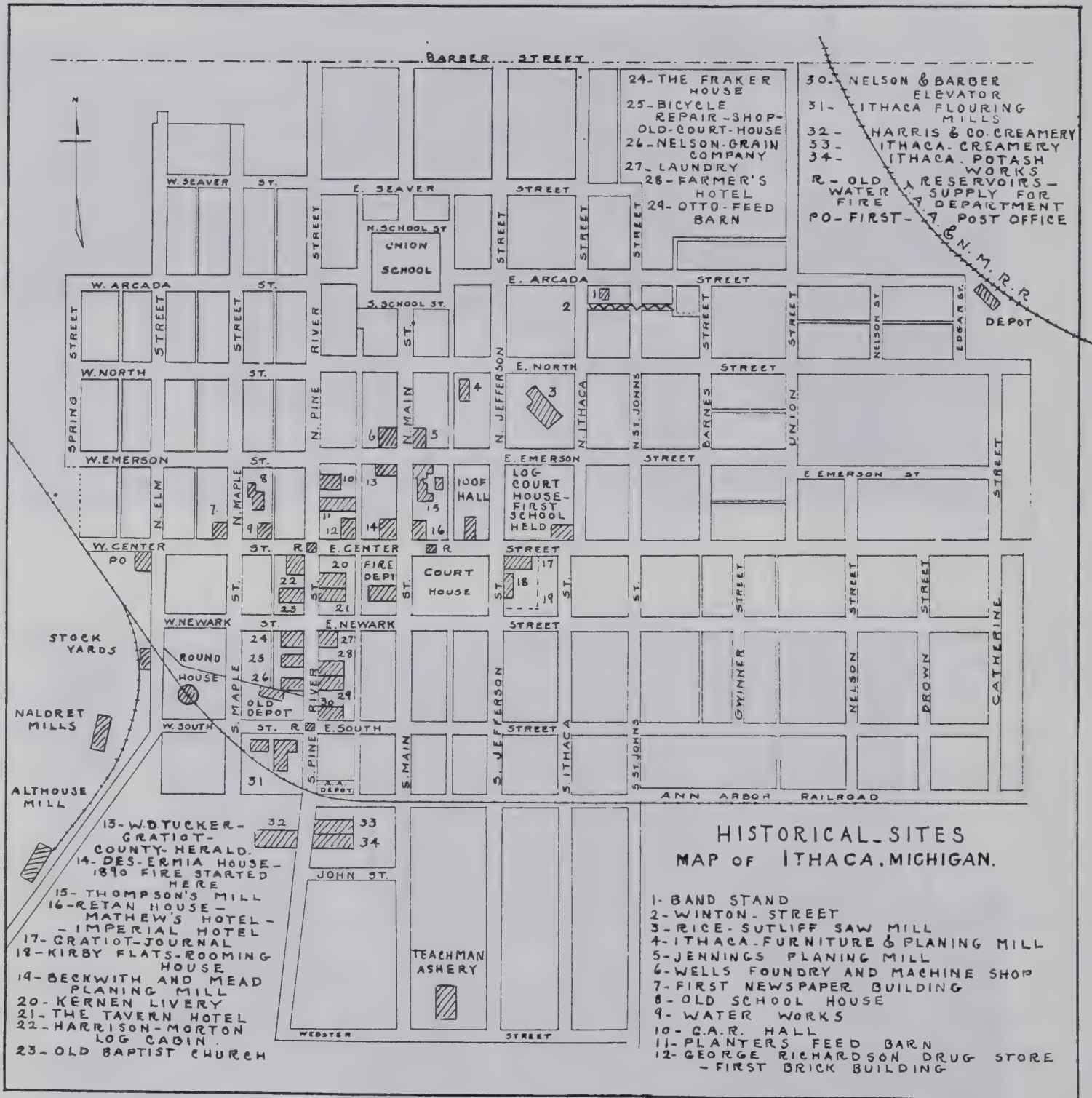
TROJAN TRUCK

After the butter tub factory moved to Hill City, Minnesota, in 1910, industry was at a stand still in Ithaca. The Shaw beet lifter was being manufactured in 1913 on the corner of Center and South Streets. In the early 1920's when truck manufacturing was becoming popular, a group of Ithaca people sold stock and started to manufacture a truck in the building formerly occupied by the butter tub factory. The Trojan truck venture proved unsuccessful and the factory was closed. In the mid 1920's another venture by local people was started, and for a short while electric washing machines were made in the same building.

From the time of the depression in 1929 there was no manufacturing in Ithaca until the Redmond Co. moved here in 1946. This company, which is a major manufacturer of fractional horsepower electric motors, has an average employment of more than 200, and at one time reached upwards to 500 employees.

In 1947 the Wolverine Shoe & Tanning Corp. opened a leather glove factory in the old Journal office and reached a peak employment of about 70. This plant moved its operations to an out-of-town location in 1949, and in 1951 the same manufacturer moved into a large modern plant on Union Street and began manufacturing shoes. The building for this new factory was built by the Ithaca Building Corp. and two additions have been made to the building in recent years to care for expansion. The shoe plant has about 180 employees.

Ithaca now has two other manufacturers with a lesser number of employees but of great value to the community. The Dilts & Wetzel company manufactures vegetable harvesting machines. The Gruesbeck Manufacturing Co. makes fine farm wagons and farm conveyor machines.





PLANTER'S BARN
120 North Pine River Street



KERN'S BARN
115 South Pine River Street



REEVES BLACKSMITH SHOP
200 Block South Pine River Street



ROBB BLACKSMITH SHOP
121 East Emerson Street



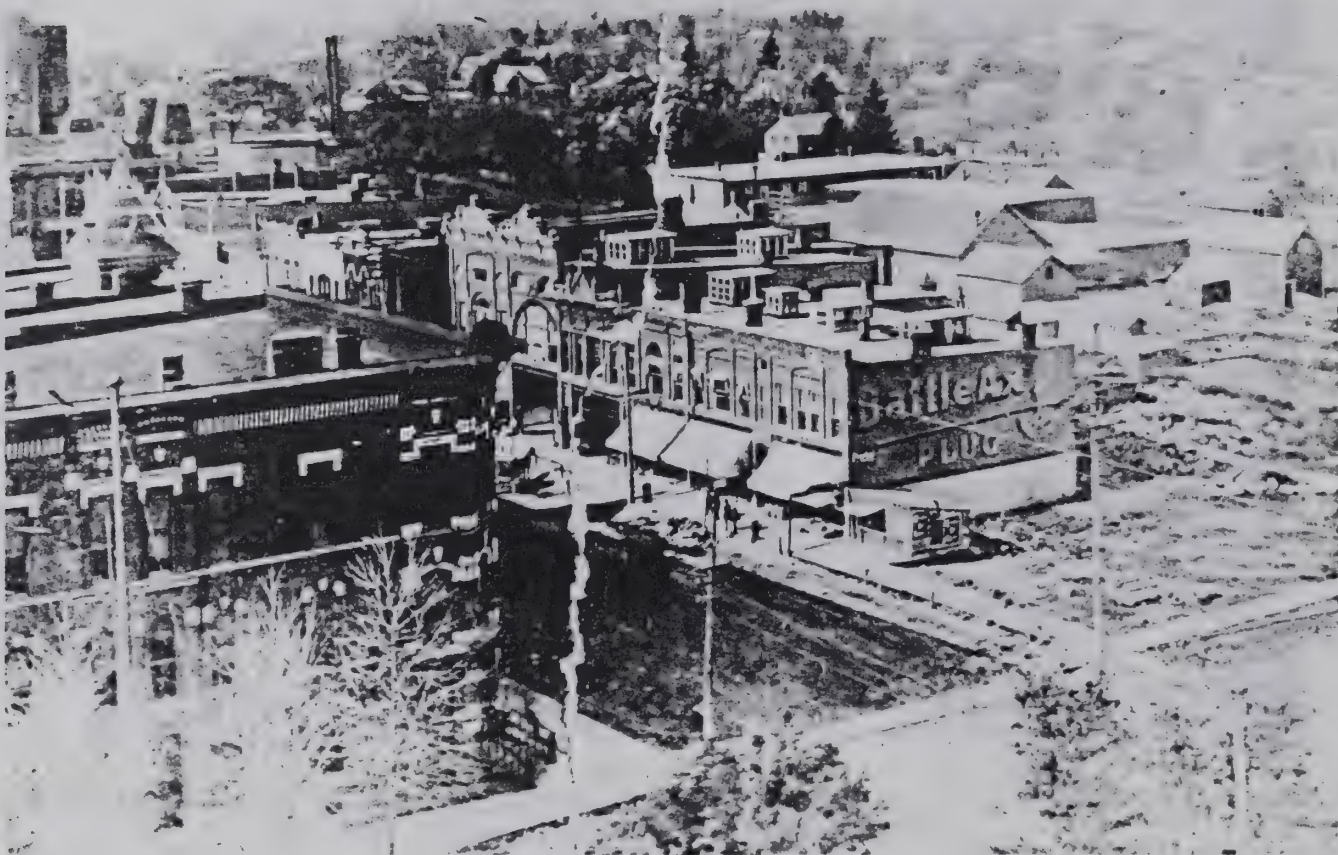
BROWN MOTOR SALES. Erected in 1909 at 135 South Pine River Street. The first building built in central Michigan for a garage.



THE FIRST GAS STATION in Ithaca was built on the southeast corner of Pine River and Emerson Streets by Charles Jessup and opened for business August 27, 1920.



VIEWS FROM THE COURTHOUSE TOWER

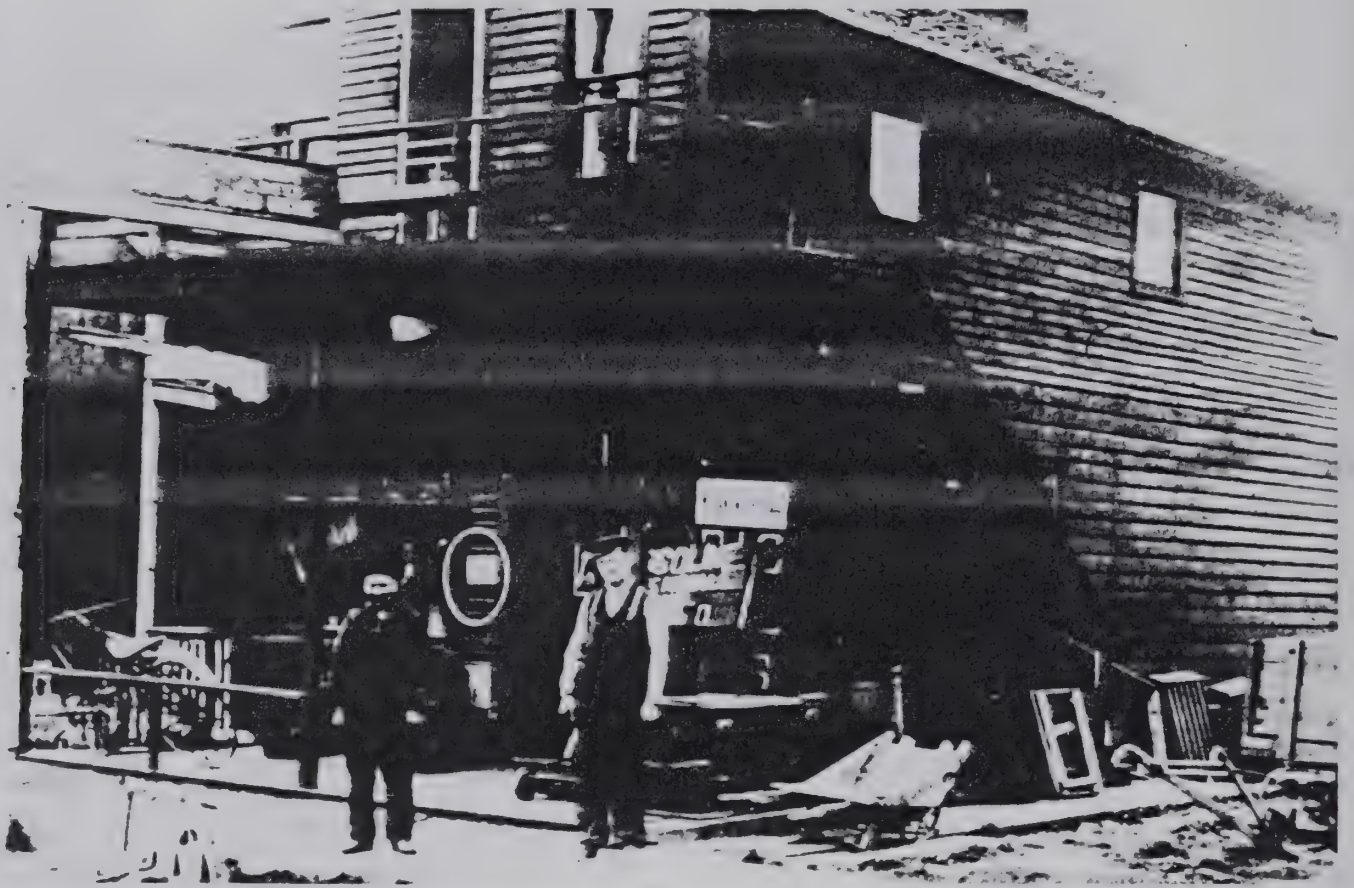




(1) Ithaca Roller Mills. (2) Otto Feed Barn. (3) Nelson Grain Company. (4) Farmer's Hotel. (5) Markman's Secondhand Store. (6) Reeves Blacksmith Shop. (7) Fraker House. (8) Old Bank Building before conversion to laundry. (9) Poultry house.



(1) Thompson home barn. (2) Brown-Davis Company.



J. H. Markman's second-hand store was about where the south end of the Redmond Co. is. The building was the first frame courthouse, built in 1861. It was moved to about 213 South Alley Street in the 1920's and is now used as a welding shop.



AIR VIEW OF THE OLD FAIRGROUNDS

Ithaca Chamber of Commerce

While a businessmen's association existed in Ithaca around the turn of the century, the exact date that it was organized has long been forgotten, along with the date that the so-called Board of Trade ceased to function.

Following the close of World War I the business people once again began to realize the need of working together, and on July 31, 1920, Articles of Association were filed with the State of Michigan, and the Ithaca Chamber of Commerce was incorporated as a non-profit organization with 14 charter members. With records limited and memories short, little is known of the early activities of the organization. Current records indicate, however, there were always enough interested members to "promote and foster commercial, social, moral and community interests within the village and the community."

With the coming of the great depression in 1929, it was only natural that the businessmen were brought to realize the need of a stronger organization to assure their survival, and a complete new constitution was adopted for the Chamber of Commerce to bind them closer together.

The new Constitution mandated the officers to hold at least five full membership meetings each year, one of which would be a banquet feting the athletes of the high school. It was at this first Athletic Banquet in December 1929 that the Clinton V. Ballard Trophy was initially presented to Ithaca's most outstanding football player, a practice which was recently discontinued by the Chamber of Commerce and assumed by the high school. Mr. Ballard, who died this year, was an outstanding athlete of Ithaca, later a member of the faculty at Michigan State College.

Throughout the years the organization has made an endeavor to promote active programs for business and civic welfare, but it was not until 1945 that it made its first bid for major industry. That year an industrial committee, the first ever appointed, brought an interested manufacturer to town and in less than one week raised sufficient funds to complete the purchase of a factory site. The money, which was later returned to the organization by the industrialist, became the basis for a present-day corporation organized to bring additional industry to Ithaca. The small initial expenditure has been returned a thousandfold to every merchant through the steady payrolls created.

Following the passing of the County Fair (Gratiot County Agricultural Society) in 1949, the Chamber of Commerce was determined to replace this annual event for the people of the community; thus it was the regular Fall Festival came into existence in 1950. The Festival provides a place for the continuance of the annual calf scramble and prize steer auctions which the merchants of Ithaca instituted many years ago. So in one more way merchants extend their services to the rural folks whose constant patronage makes their very existence possible.

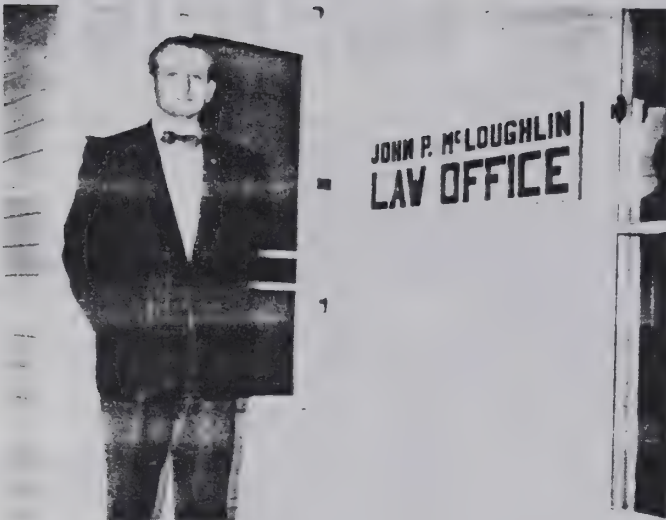
The spot on the calendar set aside for the Festival was jointly approved by the County Board of Supervisors, the Village Council and the Chamber of Commerce for the Centennial Celebration for Gratiot county and Ithaca in 1955. An advisory board was organized by the appointed representatives of the three groups to handle the affairs of the Centennial and in order to comply with non-profit organization laws, it was made a division of the Chamber of Commerce with separate officers made responsible for its activities.

In 1955 the Chamber of Commerce moved into its own offices at 117 West Center Street.

The Ithaca Chamber of Commerce of 1955 with 149 members in a town of nearly 3,000 people, as contrasted with only 14 members in a village of 1,900 people 35 years ago, is vivid evidence of the progress made possible through coordinated action.



ITHACA TODAY



John P. McLoughlin, Attorney at Law
405 W. Center Street
Established 1946



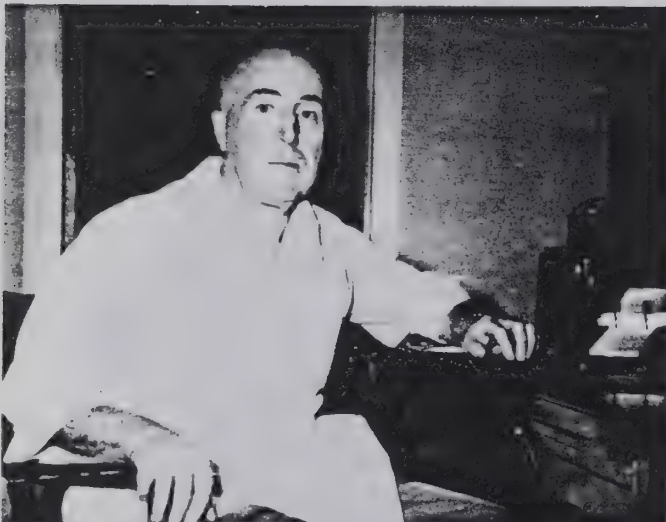
Seaver Hotel
Pine River & Center Streets
Established 1890



J. L. Barden & Sons
225 W. Center Street
Established 1902



Larry's Hardware
102 E. Center Street
Established 1928



A. L. Aldrich, Physician & Surgeon
117 W. Center Street
Established 1929

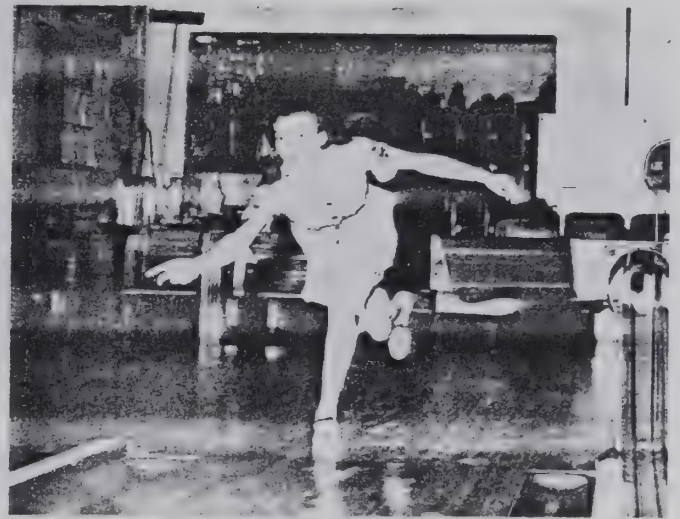


Wingets Market
106 E. Center Street
Established 1951

ITHACA TODAY



Beebe Furniture Co
108 E. Center Street
Established 1918



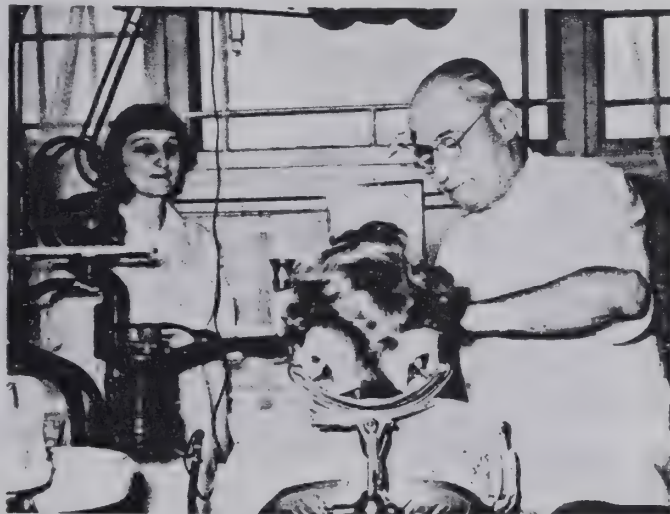
A. B. C. Bowling Alleys
East Center Street
Established 1945



Central Cafe
114 E. Center Street
Established 1953



McCormacks
142 E. Center Street
Established 1901



Stanley C. Brown, Dentist
120-1 2 E. Center Street
Established 1928

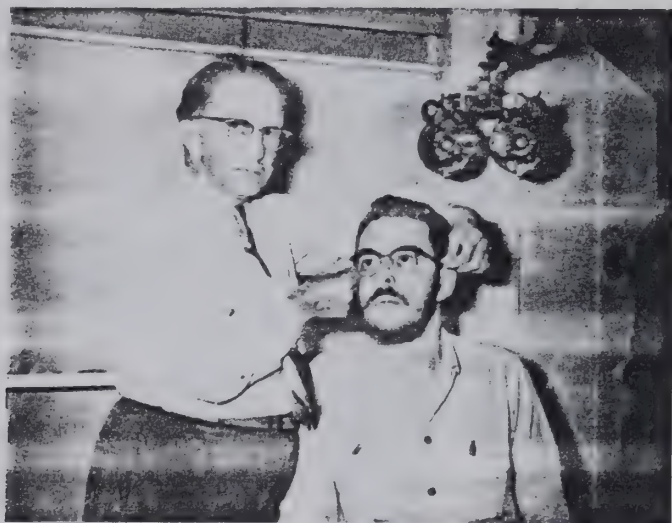


The Commercial National Bank of Ithaca
144 E. Center Street
Established 1893

ITHACA TODAY



McWilliams Bakery
146 E. Center Street
Established 1952



H. B. Thompson
Masonic Building
Established 1908



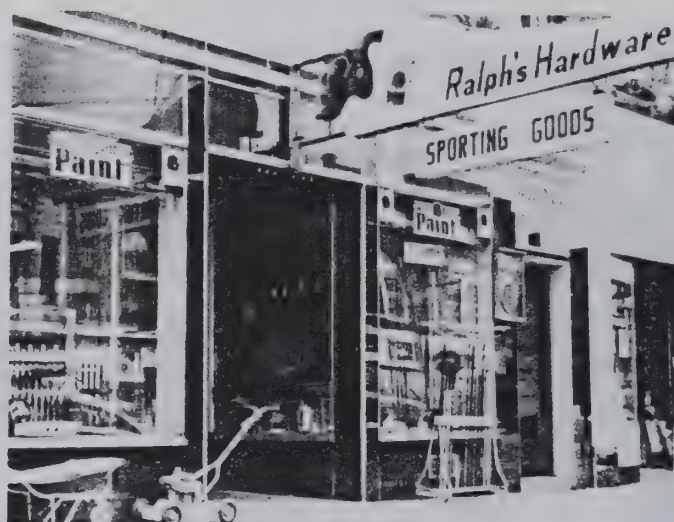
Ideal Theatre
158 E. Center Street
Established 1921



Keffer Pharmacy
160 Center Street
Established 1952



Robert L. Arnold, Law Offices
Masonic Building
Established 1930



Ralph's Hardware
164 E. Center Street
Established August 1951

ITHACA TODAY



Gay's 5 & 10 Store
East Center Street
Established 1928



Davis & Godley Gulf Service
500 E. Center Street
Established March 10, 1955



Gratiot County Abstract Co.
Center & Main
Established 1860



Purdy Pontiac Sales
712 E. Center Street
Established September 1939



Michigan Heating & Air Conditioning
316 E. Center Street
Established 1949



Peters Motel
820 E. Center Street
Established August 1, 1950

ITHACA TODAY



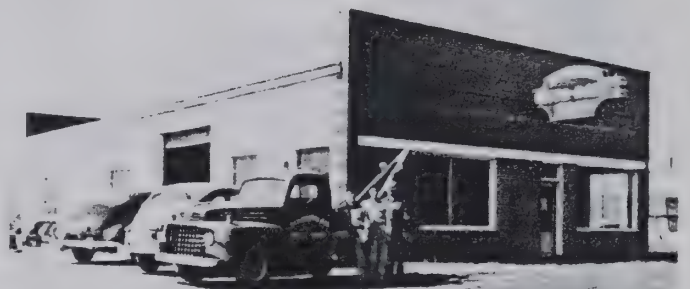
Bouchey's Monument Shop
U. S. 27 East
Established 1954



Dilts & Wetzel
1248 E. Washington Road
Established March 1948



Ithaca Grill
U. S. 27 East
Established 1954



Harold Zimmerman Body Shop
1258 E. Washington Road
Established January 1, 1950

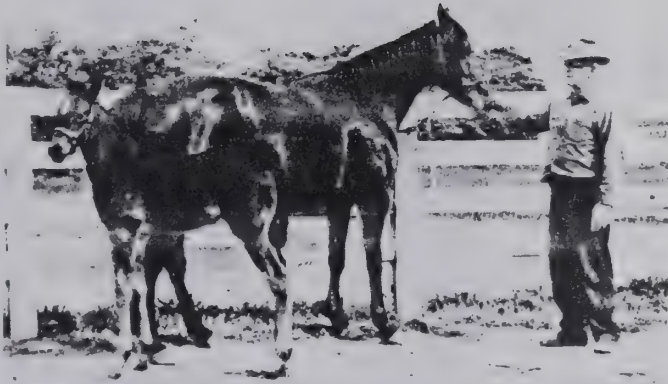


Dilts Equipment Co.
600 E. Washington Road
Established June 1, 1946



Kleinhan's Nursery
160 Croswell Road
Established 1938

ITHACA TODAY



Park Hill Farms
Dr. F. R. McNabb, D. V. M.
530 W. Center Street
Established 1948



Ken's Tavern
100 W. Center Street
Established 1949



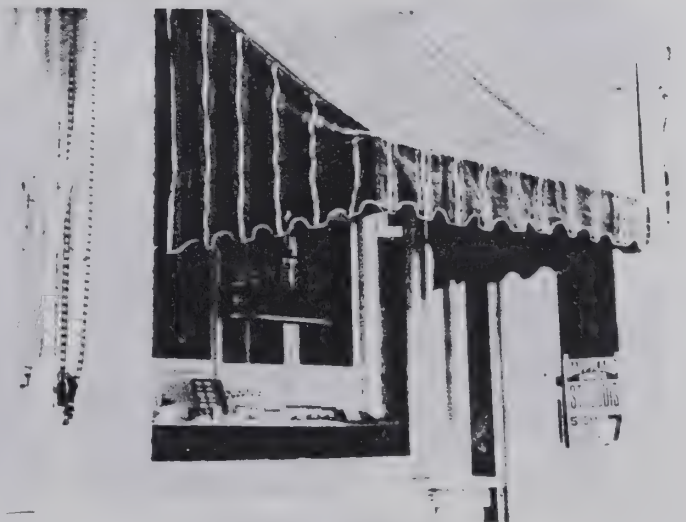
Thayer K. Rayburn, Representative
The Equitable Life Assurance Society
108 N. Elm Street
Established August 1953



Rasors Cafe
101 E. Center Street
Established 1917



Hanner's Magazines
103 W. Center Street
Established 1946



Holcomb Jewelry
105 E. Center Street
Established 1947

ITHACA TODAY



Greers Barber Shop
105 E. Center Street
Established February, 1926



J. L. Barden & Sons
125 E. Center Street
Established 1902



Paul Dionese Store
115 E. Center Street
Established 1915



Wetzels Clothing
127 E. Center Street
Established 1945



Mary Ellen Shop
119 E. Center Street
Established 1933



Goodwins Drug Store
129 E. Center Street
Established 1936

ITHACA TODAY



Walter O. Brown
Your Tailor, Your Dry Cleaner
135-1, 2 E. Center Street
Established 1922



Johnson's Color & Harmony Shop
153 E. Center Street
Established 1944



Kern's Style Shop
145 E. Center Street
Established 1933



East Side Cafe
157 E. Center Street
Established 1949



Barrones Market
147 E. Center Street
Established 1913



Rhynard's Firestone
159 E. Center Street
Established 1941

ITHACA TODAY



Rhynard's Shell Service
Center & Main
Established June 10, 1930



Lucille's Flowers
213 E. Center Street
Established 1951



Barney's Standard Service
205 E. Center Street
Established September 1953



Reeves Oldsmobile
215 E. Center Street
Established 1907



H & H Store
213 E. Center Street
Established November 25, 1935



Maxwell's Sealtest Dairy
115 N. Jefferson Street
Established 1952

ITHACA TODAY



Clare's Cities Service
301 E. Center Street
Established September 28, 1952



Zimmerman Motor Sales
509 E. Center Street
Established 1939



William J. Hodges
Bituminous Road Construction
317 E. Center Street
Established 1931



Buerge's Pure Oil Service
531 E. Center Street
Established 1953



Leslie H. Simmet
503 E. Center Street
Established May 4, 1920



Earl's Sign Service
531 E. Center Street
Established 1954

ITHACA TODAY



Floyd M. Moore, Real Estate
701 E. Center Street
Established 1945



R. N. Monroe
588 N. Union Street
Established 1942



Little's Grocery
725 E. Center Street
Established March 1, 1955



Ithaca Tractor Sales
E. Washington Road
Established April 1, 1951

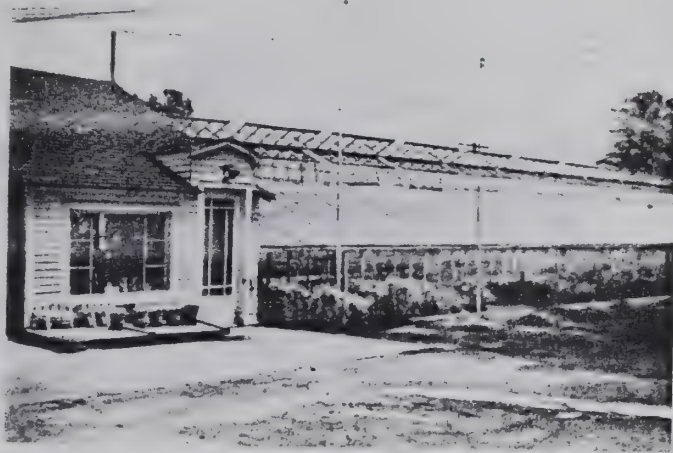


Fidlers Poultry
304 Union Street
Established 1945



Johnson & Sons
1001 E. Washington Road
Established December 1, 1936

ITHACA TODAY



Way-Side Green House
N. Pine River Street
Established 1950



Ginther Chevrolet Sales
117 N. Pine River Street
Established 1919



C. E. Burt, Physician
135 N. Pine River Street
Established 1914



Feller's Cut Rate
111 N. Pine River Street
Established 1942



Ithaca Motor Sales
119 N. Pine River Street
Established 1919



Ithaca Radio-TV Sales & Service
107 N. Pine River Street
Established 1939

ITHACA TODAY



Robert Sawyer, Insurance
110 S. Pine River Street
Established 1923



The Davis Co.
128 S. Pine River Street
Established 1922



Blue Bonnet Shoe Repair
S. Pine River Street
Established 1947



Redmond Co., Inc.
S. Pine River Street
Established 1946



The Putnam Co.
126 S. Pine River Street
Established 1930



Ithaca Elevator Co.
216 S. Pine River Street

ITHACA TODAY



Ithaca Roller Mills
304 S. Pine River Street
Established 1899



Gratiot Metals Co.
H. P. Berman - Gus Blaksmith
254 W. South Street
Established 1915



Farmers Gas & Oil of Michigan
420 S. Pine River Street
Established 1932



E. M. Bowen, Veterinarian
120 E. Newark Street
Established 1952



Gratiot Farmers Supply Co.
307 S. Elm Street

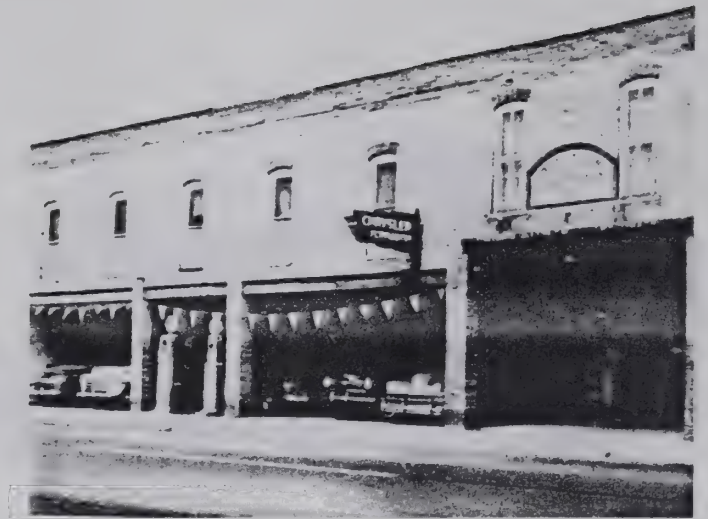


R. B. Castle, D.V.M.
610 S. Jefferson Street
Established 1941

ITHACA TODAY



H. F. Kilborn, Physician
218 N. Pine River Street
Established 1914



Vernon's Garage
120 N. Pine River Street
Established 1913



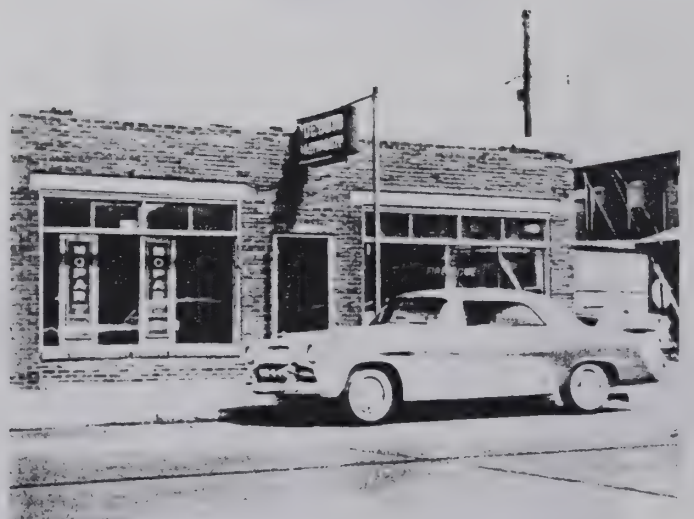
Emery's Pure Oil Service
138 N. Pine River Street
Established 1945



Vernon's TV & Appliances
118 N. Pine River Street
Established 1950



Dr. William S. Brilhart, D.O.
126 N. Pine River Street
Established 1953



Kernen's Sales & Service
112 N. Pine River Street
Established 1946

ITHACA TODAY



Lola's Beauty Shop
110 N. Pine River Street
Established 1949



Ithaca Locker Storage
135 S. Pine River Street
Established 1941



Klien Brothers
121 S. Pine River Street
Established 1930



Ithaca Lumber & Coal Co.
235 S. Pine River Street
Established 1907



Stonebrooks Stove Shop
125 S. Pine River Street
Established 1927



Bowen & Sons
415 S. Pine River Street
Established 1942

ITHACA TODAY



Beverly's Beauty Salon
127 N. Main Street
Established 1954



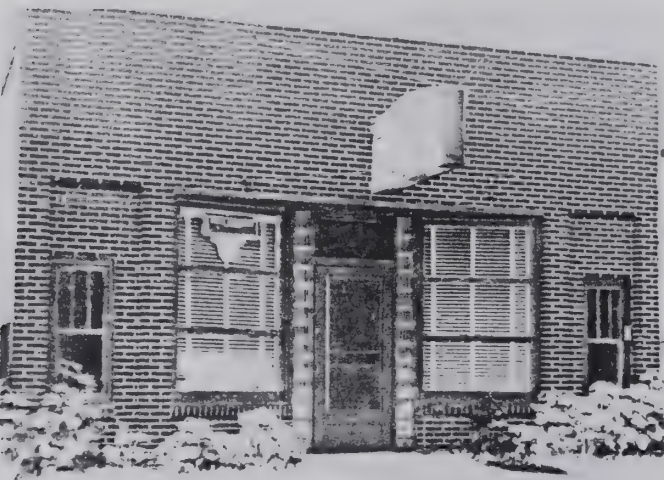
Passenger Building
114 S. Main Street
Established 1952



Gratiot County Herald
124 N. Main Street
Established 1858



Mich-A-Finish Photo Service
136 S. Main Street
Established 1945



H & H Cleaners
118 S. Main Street
Established May 1946



Whightsil's Radio & TV Sales & Service
605 S. Main Street
Established June 1, 1954

ITHACA TODAY



M. J. Budge, M. D.
103 S. Jefferson Street
Established April 1, 1921



Peters Barber Shop
303 E. North Street
Established 1928



Rex Dairy
502 E. Emerson
Established 1953



F. O. Burr & Son
118 E. Emerson Street
Established 1950



Wiggins Convalescent Home
302 N. Pine River Street
Established July 5, 1950

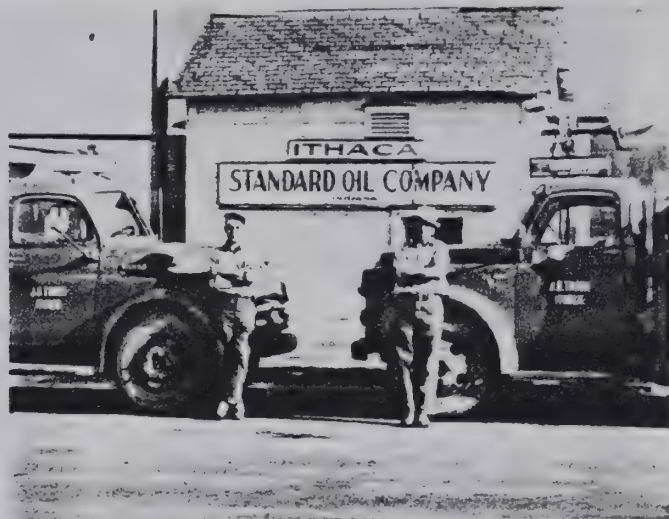


Clyde Davenport, Auctioneer
129 N. Jefferson
Established 1920

ITHACA TODAY



Beebe Funeral Home
125 S. Jefferson Street
Established 1934



J. D. Trask Standard Oil Products
West South Street
Established 1940



Seal Rich Dairy Products
219 N. Catherine Street
Established 1951



Wolverine Shoe & Tanning Corp.
N. Union Street
Established 1951



E. A. Ochs, Chiropractor
304 S. Main Street
Established 1952



Sheline Clinic
S. Pompeii Road
Established 1955



ITHACA-GRATIOT CENTENNIAL BOARD -- Back row: William J. Hodges, county; Fred Howes, Chamber of Commerce; Fred Rossow, county; (inset) William Probst, county. Front row: Robert L. Arnold, treasurer; Guy Weller, general chairman; N. A. Trexler, village.

THE CENTENNIAL BOARD WISHES TO EXPRESS APPRECIATION TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE WHO CONTRIBUTED MATERIAL FOR THIS BOOK:

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The following pages were left blank for your own pictures in this record of Ithaca's first one hundred years.

YOUR OWN CENTENNIAL PICTURES





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